

**CURRENT THOUGHTS
ON
SIKHISM**

Editor
Kharak Singh

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Editor: Dr Kharak Singh

INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES
959, Sector 59, SAS Nagar, Chandigarh 160 059

ISBN 81-85815-01-1

1996

Copies: 1100

Price: 400/-

Laserset by:

Alpha Beta Computers,

S.C.F. 49, Sector 59, SAS Nagar, Chandigarh 160 059

Ph. 670711

Published by:

INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES

959, Sector 59, SAS Nagar, Chandigarh 160 059

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Institute of Sikh Studies

**TO
SARDAR DALJEET SINGH
WHO
'SERVED THE LORD WITH WISDOM'**

(ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ)

CONTENTS

Foreword

Our Contributors

Introduction	Dr Kharak Singh	1
Welcome Address	Dr Kuldip Singh	7
Key-note Address	Prof. Gurtej Singh	10

Section I HOMAGE

S. Daljeet Singh — A Homage	Dr Kharak Singh	33
Daljeet Singh — My Younger Brother	S. Hardyal Singh	42
Chance Happening or Destiny?	Prof. Jagjit Singh	49
S. Daljeet Singh: A Beacon of Inspiration	Dr G.S. Dhillon	51
S. Daljeet Singh — A Vivek Budhi Sikh Widwan	S. S. Sodhi & J.S. Mann	53
The Sainly Sardar Daljeet Singh	S. Karnail Singh	56

Section II SIKH IDENTITY

Sikh Identity and Sikh Ideology	Dr Surjit Singh Bhatia	61
Formation of Early Sikh Identity	Dr Balwant S. Dhillon	75
Sikh Identity in the Context of Resurgent Modern India	Prof. Gurtej Singh	85
Sikh Identity in the Context of Punjab Issue	Dr James Massey	112

Section III SIKH INSTITUTIONS

Sikh Institutions and Their Contribution	Sardar Narindar Singh	131
Institution of Panj Piaras — Its Potential and Present Perspective	Prof. Madanjit Kaur	144
Sikh Institutions — Their Potential and Contribution	Ms Baljit Kaur	159
Sikh Gurdwaras in History and Role of Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar	Sardar Karnail Singh	169
Akal Takht and Sikh Heritage	Dr G.S. Dhillon	210
Akal Takht — Concept of Miri-Piri	Giani Bachittar Singh	216
Role of Miri-Piri in Modern Society	Sardar S.S. Narang	227

Section IV GENERAL

World-view in Sikhism	Dr H.S. Virk	251
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Where are the Women?	Ms Alice Basarke	260
Place and Role of Woman in Sikh Society	Dr Gurnam Kaur	266
Problem of Date Conversions in Sikh History	S. Pal Singh Purewal	280
Proposed New Calendar for Nanakshahi Samvat	S. Pal Singh Purewal	294
Sikh Studies as a Paradigm in Comparative Religion	Dr Noel Q. King	298
Role of Tradition in Sikh Historiography	Dr Kirpal Singh	301
Sikh Architecture	Sardar Narindar Singh	307
Contribution of Sikh Gurus to Indian Musicology	Prof. Sher S. Sher	319
Sikh Polity	Dr G.S. Dhillon	328
Sikh Situation Today	Col. Partap Singh	349
Aad Guru Granth Sahib: Fallacies and Facts	Dr D.S. Chahal	371
Offshore Sikhs: Trusts versus Gurdwara Election (Fallout)	S. Har Iqbal Singh Sara	393
Sikhs and Sikhism: Now and Beyond 2000 in Canada	Dr D.S. Chahal	399
Academic Challenges for 21st Century	Dr J.S. Mann	407
Sikhism: Patterns of Search for Justice	Dr N. Muthumohan	413
Application of Hindu Law to the Sikhs	Dr Kashmir Singh	423
Sikh Personal Law and Article 25 of Constitution	S. Harbinder Pal Singh	437

Section V PUNJABI

ਇਕ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ, ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ	Dr Gurnam Kaur	447
ਆਹ ! ਦੁਲਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ	S. Harbhajan Singh	453
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ: ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ	Dr B.S. Dhillon	455
ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਤੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ	Prof. Prabhjot Kaur	478
ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਭਵਿੱਖ	Prof. Gurbakhsh Singh	489
ਕੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ: ਸਰੂਪ, ਸਥਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਧਾਨ	Dr Jagir Singh	492
ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ	S. Jasbir Singh Sarna	508
ਸਿੱਖ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕਾਵਾਂ	S. Rajinder Singh Gabbi	518
ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ: ਨਵਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ	S. Pal Singh Purewal	525
ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ	Dr H.S. Virk	532

Section VI APPENDIXES

I. Resolutions adopted at the S. D.S. Memorial I. S. S. Conference	541
II. Institute of Sikh Studies: An Introduction	545

FOREWORD

I take sincere pleasure in presenting this gift of the Institute to our readers, which reflects the collective thinking of the entire intellectual community of Sikhs on several basic issues.

Identity of Sikhism was never in doubt. Some sections of non-Sikhs have, however, found it difficult to concede this fact. This failure has invariably led to problems, the latest among which are the happenings in Punjab during the last few decades. It is hoped that this volume will lead to a better understanding of the Sikh faith, which, as Dr Noel King says, is a paradigm for study of comparative religion. With its emphasis on balanced spiritual and physical development of the individual and Society, on justice and equality of all human beings, on work and sharing, and its philosophy of love and brotherhood of mankind and fatherhood of Akal Purakh (The Immortal Lord), Sikhism is a religion for the world in the coming centuries.

The present volume is indeed a positive contribution towards this realisation. It reiterates what M.A. Macauliffe said a century ago:

"We shall see hereafter, it would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system".

Sikh Religion, 1909

I express my sincere appreciation of Dr Kharak Singh, both in organising the "Sardar Daljeet Singh Memorial International Sikh Studies Conference", and in editing this book.

December 20, 1995

Kuldip Singh

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INTRODUCTION

Sardar Daljeet Singh Memorial International Sikh Studies Conference, 1995, which attracted the essays included in this volume, was itself a memorable event. It is extremely rare for such a large number of scholars, representing almost every part of the globe, to sit together in the academic atmosphere of a University Campus, and share their views on selected basic aspects of the Sikh faith. The nature of the subjects covered in the papers presented and their quality lend further importance to this academic exercise.

Ideological identity of Sikhism is indeed the central theme. Although the papers in this volume deal with a variety of subjects, they all provide irrefutable evidence of the independent identity of Sikhism. Sardar Daljeet Singh was the undisputed champion of this cause. Most earlier scholars were at pains to discover a relationship between Sikhism and other religious systems. Some of them wanted to establish roots of Sikhism in ancient Hindu thought, and sought confirmation of the views of Guru Nanak in the *Vedas* and other Hindu scriptures. They also saw a very close link between the Sikh movement and the *Bhakti* movement of the medieval age. In fact, the former was described only as a part of the latter. There were others who saw a close affinity between Sikh thought and Islam, based on the Sikh belief in One God and rejection of the Hindu caste system, ritualism, etc. Both of these apparently divergent views deny independent status to Sikhism as a religion. While the former view regarded Sikhs as a sect of Hindus, the latter claimed that it was a syncretism of selected tenets drawn from Hinduism and Islam. Such erroneous thinking continued to dominate in Sikh studies, in spite of an unequivocal assertion made by the erudite Sikh scholar, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha in his famous treatise '*Ham Hindu Nahin*', towards the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, some misguided scholars among Sikhs themselves contradicted Bhai Kahn Singh with a rejoinder '*Ham Hindu Hain*'. Missionaries and chauvinists of other religions encouraged this view in the hope that it would keep Sikhism out of their way as a world religion.

This was the confusion that Sardar Daljeet Singh inherited, when he came on the scene of Sikh studies in the seventies of the present century. A group led by W.H. McLeod, had mounted an organised assault on the identity of Sikhism. He wanted us to believe that Guru Nanak was only one of the medieval *bhagats*, and that he founded no new religion. Not only was there no defence against it, the work of these adversaries was even hailed as a great service to Sikhism.

Sardar Daljeet Singh played a crucial and pioneering role in the fight against the mounting campaign of misrepresentation of Sikhism and distortion of Sikh history. His contribution has been adequately brought out in the articles reproduced in Section I, particularly the one by Dr Kharak Singh, who rightly calls him 'Man of the Century', comparing him with stalwarts like Giani Dit Singh, of the previous centuries in Sikh history. Sardar Hardyal Singh, provides glimpses of the early life of Sardar Daljeet Singh, his brother, and highlights his earlier interest in religion and later commitment to Sikhism. Sardar Jagjit Singh relates how a chance look at a newspaper carrying Khushwant Singh's review of Dr McLeod's controversial book "Evolution of the Sikh Community", supporting his thesis, perturbed Sardar Daljeet Singh, and led to his determination to fight misrepresentation of Sikhism for the rest of his life. Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon calls him a beacon of inspiration. The articles by Dr S.S. Sodhi & Dr J.S. Mann, and Sardar Karnail Singh also pay glowing tributes to him, which are richly deserved.

In the keynote address, Sardar Gurtej Singh has mentioned a number of areas which demand attention of scholars and the Sikh Panth, e.g., the need for translation of Guru Granth Sahib in leading languages of the world, its standardised version in Roman script, its computerised version, a comprehensive dictionary of all places, names of persons, reference to historical and scientific facts, languages used, flora and fauna, etc., mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib. He referred to the *pamalis* in vogue for interpretation of *Gurbani*, and emphasized that the one based on Dr Sahib Singh's *vyakaran* and the life of the Gurus alone could be considered valid. He deprecated the motivated attempts to question the authenticity and integrity of Guru Granth Sahib, and wanted a ban on such studies. Among other points stressed were the need for religious education, upholding *rahit maryada* already approved by the Panth, a campaign against drug addiction, attention

to preservation of Sikh heritage, particularly historical buildings, and protection of environment.

Among the topics dealt with in this book, 'Sikh Identity' dominates. Dr Surjit Singh Bhatia has examined the issue in detail from all aspects, particularly the ideological base of Sikhism to delineate its identity. Prof. Gurtej Singh and Dr James Massey support the conclusion in the context of the resurgent modern India, and recent developments in the Punjab. Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon produces convincing evidence to show that Sikh identity was clearly visible even in the early Guru Period.

Prof. Gurtej Singh also proposes in his article, a new theory of the 'Freedom Struggle' of India. According to his interpretation, which cannot be brushed aside, this struggle was aborted by Queen Victoria's proclamation in 1859, promising progressive introduction of self-rule and gradual transfer of power to Indians. As a result, the so called freedom struggle was no more than a fight between the two major contenders, viz., Hindus and Muslims, for succession to power. Only the Sikhs, who had no such designs, were serious about fighting for freedom. That partly explains why major sacrifices, as revealed by statistics on persons hanged or jailed for life, etc., came overwhelmingly from Sikhs. Contribution of others was only nominal. This is a theory that needs to be studied carefully, since it has lessons for the future.

Section III covers the institutions, which are unique to Sikhism. Sardar Narinder Singh and Ms. Baljit Kaur list the major Sikh institutions and discuss their contribution towards the spiritual and socio-political development of the Panth.

Sardar Sarup Singh Narang explains the Sikh doctrine of *miri-piri*, which is fundamental to Sikhism, and distinguishes it from the earlier religious tradition in India, with an unprecedented clarity. His exposition is extremely lucid and convincing. Dr Madanjit Kaur highlights the institution of *Panj Piaras*, and its role in major decisions of the Panth. Sardar Karnail Singh traces the history of the institution of *gurdwaras* and furnishes historical details of the movement that led to their liberation from the Government-backed corrupt *mahants*. The crucial role played by Sardar Kartar Singh Jhabbar in the struggle is highlighted. Dr G.S. Dhillon and Giani Bachittar Singh explain the purpose of Akal Takht and its hold over temporal as well as religious

affairs of Sikhs.

Papers in the General Section cover a variety of subjects. Dr Muthu Mohan brings out the emphasis on justice in the teachings of the Gurus, while Dr H.S. Virk discusses the world-view in Sikhism, based on his knowledge of physics. He finds a perfect accord between the latest findings of science and the observations made by Guru Nanak in his *bani* over 500 years ago. Dr Noel King in his brief article sees in Sikhism a paradigm for studies in comparative religion.

The status of women in Sikhism and their role in Sikh history receives special attention in the papers of Dr Gurnam Kaur, Ms. Prabhjot Kaur and Ms Alice Basarke. They bring out the perfect equality of man and woman in the teachings of the Gurus, which should be observed in practice also. Ms Basarke points out some areas in history where further research is necessary.

Dr Jasbir Singh Mann and Dr Jasbir Singh Sarna list some of the challenges that face the Sikh community, particularly in the academic field. Dr D.S. Chahal also dwells on the same subject. In another paper, he lists some important facts and fallacies about Guru Granth Sahib. He also proposes a system of referencing *Gurbani*, which will surely be read with keen interest by scholars.

In a rapid survey, Col. Partap Singh traces the course of events during the past few decades. He is justifiably sore that the Sikh case has not been handled with fairness. In a thought-provoking article, Dr G.S. Dhillon has initiated a vital debate on Sikh polity. It is expected that it will lead to crystallization of concrete views on how to apply the philosophy preached by the Gurus to practical politics and governance.

Sardar Narindar Singh provides an interesting introduction to Sikh architecture, a subject on which there is very little published literature at the moment. It is hoped that his lead will be followed by others interested in the discipline. Prof. Sher Singh Sher has contributed a very informative paper, highlighting the contribution made by the Sikh Gurus towards musicology. Although *kirtan* (Sikh form of devotional music) plays a key role in the practice of Sikh religion, literature on the subject is extremely limited. This article is, therefore, a useful contribution, as also is the one by Dr Jagir Singh.

Sardar H. Iqbal Singh Sara's views on trusts and gurdwara elections are indeed interesting, and ought to be considered seriously

by all Sikhs. The widespread wrangle over control of gurdwaras is indeed deplorable and violates the spirit of Sikhism. The views of Dr Kashmir Singh and S. Harbinderpal Singh on the Sikh Personal Law, and the application of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution to Sikhs also deserve serious notice. It has been shown that its application was not only superfluous, but also unjust. On Personal Law, it needs to be noted that while the Gurus emphasized the basic requirements of jurisprudence, viz., truthfulness, equality, welfare of all, mercy, love, service, etc., they did not consider it prudent to impose any restrictions or laws, which could become outdated or retrograde in the course of time, and lead to embarrassing situations. It is for scholars in the discipline of Law to codify a Personal Law to suit the requirements of Sikhs in the present social situation in the light of the principles enunciated by the Gurus.

Dr Kirpal Singh, the well-known authority on Sikh history, has rightly emphasized the relevance of tradition in Sikh Historiography.

A very special feature of this volume is the scholarly discussion of the Khalsa Calendar relative to its *Bikrami* and CE counterparts, by Sardar Pal Singh Purewal. He advocates desirable reforms in it, based on an accurately calculated solar year, so that *gurburbs* and other festivals could be observed on fixed days.

The views expressed in the papers are reflected in the 11 resolutions adopted at the Conference, reproduced at the end of the book. The one relating to unhindered access to gurdwaras in Pakistan, deserves particular notice. While Sikhs have been praying for it for the last half a century, no tangible steps have been taken in this direction so far. SGPC, Political parties, Punjab Govt. as well as the Central Govt. have been urged to take effective diplomatic action to achieve this goal.

Ten articles contributed by well-known authors in Punjabi are reproduced as such at the end. They also relate to the subjects mentioned earlier. There is, however, one additional topic, *Rahit Maryada*, in Prof. Gurbakhsh Singh's article. He cites examples from history to show the role of, and need for a uniform *Rahit Maryada* for integrity and unity of the Panth, and warns against dangers of encouraging demands for amendments in the one unanimously accepted earlier.

In the end I must express my sincere gratitude to the various

authors, who have contributed papers to this volume and shared their knowledge with the readers. Special thanks are due to Bibi Sumit Kaur and Dr Birendra Kaur, who looked after the production of this book at all stages, for their valuable suggestions and careful proof-reading. The credit for production of the Punjabi Section goes to Sardar Inderjit Singh. I also sincerely appreciate the contribution of Shri Ramesh Kumar, who did the typing and composing work, sitting long hours and ungrudgingly working overtime.

December 20, 1995

Kharak Singh

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WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr Kuldip Singh

Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, members of the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, participants in the seminar and honoured guests, *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh*. It is my very proud privilege to welcome you all.

Today, we have assembled in the memory of our stalwart Sardar Daljeet Singh, to follow in his footsteps and to take further the work commenced by him. Sardar Daljeet Singh wrote a great deal about Sikh Theology and Sikh Identity, to neutralise the mounting campaign of misrepresentation of Sikhism by non-Sikhs as well as by some hired Sikhs. The full detail of his monumental works will be given by Dr Kharak Singh.

The most notable work, which he did along with our respected S. Jagjit Singh, was to found the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, to bring together all those who are interested in promotion of a true picture of our religion. Soon, the Centre of Sikh Studies, Santa Ana, California, U.S.A., became a part and parcel of this Institute. Under the leadership of Dr Jasbir Singh, a noted orthopaedic surgeon, scholars of the calibre of Dr Gurbux Singh, S. Iqbal Singh, Dr Surinder Singh, S. Sukhminder Singh, S. Pal Singh and S. Ranbir Singh joined hands to present a correct interpretation of Sikh history, theology and identity. The efforts were supported by the famous Emeritus Professor of Comparative Religion, Dr Noel King and Dr James Lewis. Both Dr King and Dr Lewis correctly interpret Sikhism, following the way of M.A. Macauliffe.

When one after the other, several mercenary scholars started giving a wrong twist to the Sikh ideology, Sikh traditions, and even started questioning the authenticity of our living Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, our Institute raised a strong voice and brought the matter to the notice of *Jathedar* Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of S.G.P.C., who passed it on to the *Jathedar Akal Takht* for suitable

action. Thus, the credit for bringing about and exposing the blasphemous acts of selfish scholars working under the inspiration of Dr McLeod and under the influence of Marxist ideology, goes to the late Sardar Daljeet Singh. If the Institute had not been set up, the lone voice of individuals would not have carried much weight. The Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, protested strongly against wrong entries about Sikhism and Sikh History in several Western Encyclopaedias. There is no other *Panthic* organisation, which is ever-alert about the academic attacks on our religion.

The amount of our academic output can be a source of pride for any university. Many scholars of the universities of our State are closely associated with our work, and we always accept and appreciate their collaboration. We, the members of the Institute, work above our personal interest, and so far, our financial needs are met largely by personal contributions of our members. Our Institute is ever ready for inter-faith dialogue. The words of Guru Arjun Dev at page 885 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, "*Koi Boley Ram Ram, Koi Khudaiye; Koi Sewey Gusaian, Koi Allahey*" portray the Sikh attitude towards other faiths. We are beholden to *Jathedar* Gurcharan Singh Tohra, who has been able to spare his precious time, though deeply involved in the organisation of the "World Sikh Sammelan" on the 21st instant, for inaugurating our Conference. All of us pray for his good health and long life. He has led the SGPC for the last 21 turbulent years.

I welcome all the scholars who are presenting their work at our Conference. Besides members of the Institute, I welcome the author of the "Canadian Sikh", S. Narinder Singh from Ottawa; and the author of English-Punjabi Primer, Dr Gurbux Singh from U.S.A. I specially welcome our old friend Mr R.N. Kumar from Austria, who was the first to write his notable report on "State Terrorism" in 1988 and presented it to the Amnesty International, and later wrote a book on "The Sikh Struggle". I welcome from Patiala, Dr Balkar Singh, Dr Jodh Singh, Dr Gurnam Kaur and the President of Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, S. Rajdev Singh; I welcome Dr Noel King from California; Dr Muthu Mohan, Head, Guru Nanak Dev Chair, Madurai; Dr Himadri Banerjee and S. Saran Singh, Editor, "The Sikh Review", from Calcutta; I welcome Principal Surjit Singh from Ludhiana; I welcome James Massey, Director Society for promotion of Christian Knowledge and Culture, Delhi; I welcome Dr Balwant Singh, Dr

Hardev Singh and Dr Madanjit Kaur from Amritsar and Dr Darshan Singh, Head, Guru Nanak Dev Chair, Panjab University; Col Partap Singh and Mrs. Prabhjot Kaur from Chandigarh.

In the end, I would like to quote Guru Arjun Dev once again, he states at page 1136 of Guru Granth Sahib "*Na hum Hindu, na Musalman*". With such clear enunciation by the compiler of our living Guru, I am surprised that some Sikhs keep on saying that we are a sect of Hindus.

I welcome once again, our honoured guests who have spared time to join our discussion. Our special thanks are due to the young men and women of the local colleges, who have come to help us in the arrangements and to look after the guests.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

~ ~ ~

KEY - NOTE ADDRESS

Gurtej Singh

The Conference we are holding today and tomorrow is dedicated to the memory of late Sardar Daljeet Singh. He was an ideological lighthouse for the Sikh people. He founded the Institute of Sikh Studies, and worked almost single-handed to build it to its present stature. He was a theologian, philosopher and writer, dedicated to the Truth of Sikh religion. Sikhism differs from other religions very significantly, and has been misunderstood in proportion to its distinctiveness. Guru Nanak emphasized the clean break with the Hindu tradition almost violently by abandoning the sacred thread at a very early age, and by total denial of the authority of the Vedas, later on. Yet, the yogis took it for granted that he belonged either to one or the other Yogic orders. The Guru had to underline the denial in one of his very sharp and uncharacteristic repartees to the celebrated Bhangarnath. He was allowed to proceed to Mecca, where only Muslims may enter, and even at his death, Muslims contended that he was a true Muslim whose body must be disposed off according to rituals of their faith. In a somewhat left-handed compliment, the Ahmedias continue to accept him as a prophet of Islam. Somewhere in Tibet, there are a whole lot of devoted Buddhists who sincerely believe in Nanaknama or Riponche Guru. Quite apart from those who know the Guru to be the embodiment of the best they have in their faith, there have also been wailful and sinister distortionists with whom Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Mani Singh and Giani Ditt Singh have had to contend. In the present century, too, there is no dearth of them. Sardar Daljeet Singh stood like a rock with the torch of truth to counter the darkness such people were spreading. Without deviating from *gurbani*, he repulsed every determined sally, and progressively shed more and more light on the true ideological foundation of Sikhism.

One of his more significant contributions to Sikh studies was his establishment of the Kartarpuri Bir as the original Bir, prepared under the directions of the Fifth Nanak by the learned scribe, Bhai

Gurdas. He, thus, helped in establishing that Nanak (from the first to the tenth) was the only prophet of any faith who took meticulous care to precisely preserve the illumination as it came to him. Previously, goaded by nothing more than the desire to say something new, our scholars had proposed other texts as being more trustworthy. The perfidy blossomed into blasphemy in our own day, and chairs funded by us started uttering the most unbecoming things about our Gurus in relation to *gurbani*. So woeful was our state that those who understood, looked on helplessly and others listened to such perfidious mumblings of pseudo-scholars and nodded imperceptible assent. To Sardar Daljeet Singh must go the credit of restoring our Guru to us. Such is the gift he conferred upon us all, that we can never repay him even if we sell ourselves to serve his memory. (*Koi aan milave mera pritam piara haun tis peh aap vechai; pakha pheri, pani dhovan jo deh so khai*).

I do not minimise the contribution of other scholars when I emphasize that of Sardar Daljeet Singh. There are other great men who will always deserve the gratitude of the Sikh people. But coming when it did, the intervention of Sardar Daljeet Singh is more significant and more profound.

In an address, composed earlier to his demise, I had written, "Sardar Daljeet Singh has very kindly agreed to enlighten us on the subject of the Kartarpuri Bir. I congratulate you in advance for the privilege of hearing him". That part is now redundant, but the rest of the paragraph remains valid: "Let us make this occasion memorable by burying deep the unbecoming controversy regarding the originality of the Kartarpuri Bir. Let us by common consent decree, in behalf of the Guru Khalsa Panth, that no Bir which is not in accordance with the Kartarpuri Bir shall be printed. Let the Panth order that the decree be repeated from all the Takhts, from all the gurdwaras in the East as well as in the West, from all the pulpits, religious as well as political, and by all societies of the Sikhs, wherever they may congregate. Let us praise Guru Arjun by so decreeing and by so believing". I hope this congregation of some of the most learned and certainly some of the most concerned Sikhs, will endorse this suggestion.

For long we have neglected Guru Granth Sahib, which ironically is ever in our mind's eye, and to which we bow our heads every waking hour. Our spiritual activity is confined almost exclusively to

paying formal obeisance to the Guru at the gurdwara or in private homes. We wrap the Guru Granth Sahib in appropriately expensive robes and maintain air conditioned throne rooms for audience. In our rhetoric, we proclaim it to be the only proper spiritual refuge for the world, but we do nothing to interpret it to the world, or to make its study a feasible proposition for the seeker or the scholar. During the very first few decades of its investiture of Guruship, it was translated to Persian and Arabic, languages of most of the contemporary cultured world. We have lost both these volumes. Maybe, they are lying somewhere in some obscure libraries, waiting to be discovered. Our contribution for the last three centuries is a couple of translations in the English language and one in French which is still to be published.

Most of the translation and other scripture related work has been done by individual scholars. So far we have failed to create any institution which would make it its sole business to study the Scripture. Some of the Chairs established at certain universities have tried to do something tangible, but they have also churned out some very undesirable and half-baked matter in a desperate bid to say something different.

In this context, the list of things we do not have is long.

GURU GRANTH SAHIB IN ROMAN SCRIPT

Guru Granth Sahib is in the process of being put on the computer. It is natural to believe that, once that is done, it will be the only text which the scholars of the future will consult, study and translate. The error which creeps into it will be transmitted to many languages and it will be a Herculean task to weed them out after that.

The text should be made available in Roman script. This could become the basic text for being studied by different people knowing different languages. It will be widely used for translation to other languages. Since simultaneous translation facilities are available in many languages it is not farfetched to believe that with a proper sort of institutional set up, the Guru Granth Sahib can be made available in all major languages of the world within one decade. The entire project is expected to cost much less than the annual budget of the Dharam Parchar Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

Once it is taken on hand, perhaps it will be feasible to prepare a comprehensive dictionary of Guru Granth Sahib; one which will give a description of all the places, names of persons, reference to historical and scientific facts, languages used, flora and fauna mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib. All the myths used by the Gurus must be enumerated; references to mythology of other religions must be explained; references to administrative terms, concepts and social concerns of the times in which it was written, must be noted. Such a compendium can perhaps also help in understanding the development of the Punjabi language, customs and beliefs of the period, and one can think of a dozen other aspects with which a person translating the text into other languages must be familiar in order to do justice to the job. Perhaps the dictionary proposed here can be called something else, and perhaps it can be further subdivided into different volumes depending on the subjects covered. It is shocking that, so far, of the possible score or so volumes required, we have none in any other language. In Punjabi, we have but a few covering a limited range of subjects. The absence of all this material constitutes a severe handicap for the proper understanding of Guru Granth Sahib. Such is the state of our letters and the lack of will amongst us that in spite of knowing what must be done and in spite of having the money to do it, we continue to neglect this vital academic work.

Our highest seats of learning, both traditional and modern, have not paid attention to systematically exegetising the *gurbani* contained in Guru Granth Sahib. Very casually, and I must say quite ignorantly, some of us have almost accepted that there are many systems of interpreting *gurbani*. We have not realized that this view is the product of our varying historical fortunes and is essentially an erroneous and a jaundiced view. Ever since the remarkable Professor Sahib Singh, unveiled the mysteries of *gurbani* grammar to us, all such views are outdated. Sahib Singh corrected our defective vision and going by the grammar woven so dexterously into the text of the *bani*, was able to conclusively show that it can yield no more than one meaning. That grand old man, that true Sikh of the Guru, once and for all put an end to the concept of so called *gurpranalis* or different systems of interpretation of *bani*. He ended the vagueness consequent upon such appreciations. Let us wholeheartedly acknowledge his remarkable work. Let us praise the Guru for the unique manner in which he

preserved his *bani*, and praise this extraordinary man who was able, with His blessing, to fathom his mind on the subject. Let us no more grope in darkness. We must work in the light of the lamp lighted by him, gratefully acknowledging his contribution. Those who have known him personally, shall ever consider themselves fortunate, for he was as remarkable a human being as he was a scholar. He was my colleague at Gurmat College, Patiala, and I do not take lightly the privilege of having known him.

We all know and accept that Guru Granth Sahib is the only Gurm after the Tenth Nanak. It is also apparent that to it alone homage is due. Yet, at some Takhts of the Khalsa, Guru Granth is denied the established status of 'sole scripture' and the 'living Guru' of the Sikhs. This tantamounts to diluting the sovereign status of the Guru. How we came to accept this position in spite of the duly anointed Guru being present, defies understanding. The aberration must be corrected before the sun goes down today or tomorrow and in no case must the situation continue until the day after. I am aware that these Takhts are at a distance from the Punjab, the Homeland of the Khalsa, and that many outside factors play a part in determining what goes on there. Whatever be the limitations, Khalsa all over the world must make the position clear to our brothers in the vicinity of these Takhts and to those who control these shrines. They must understand that Guru Granth Sahib alone can preside over any congregation of the Khalsa and that only one sovereign may adorn the throne (Takht). I hope that this conclave of scholars will give proper guidance to the Sikh people in the light of history and tradition.

A word about the 'textual study' is necessary here. It simply does not make any sense as the original authenticated volume exists, and no text which predates it is available. No scholar is in a position to claim that he knows better than Guru Arjun. The seal of finality has been placed on Guru Granth Sahib by the Fifth and the Tenth Nanaks. It is folly for a mere mortal to attempt reopening it.

It is particularly absurd to seek reopening on the basis of the so-called Goindwal Pothis. It is apparent that the original date on the pothis has been deliberately washed off and even the interpolated one corresponds to 1595 AD. By comparing the text of the Japuji, which in the Kartarpuri Bir is dated prior to 1581, we know conclusively that

the *pothis* contain concocted material. Internal evidence shows that these are interpolated documents of a schismatic sect interested in challenging the succession of Guru Ramdas. The *pothis* are apparently an attempt to create a rival scripture. Thus, to attempt a textual study of the original with the help of a spurious, later document of a schismatic sect is absurd beyond measure and clearly sinister.

The position of the genuine scholars should be that until a text predating 1604 AD is discovered, until its authenticity is sustained by regular scholarly scrutiny held in the full light of the day, and until it is proved that the text so discovered was definitely not available to Guru Arjun in 1604, no one will be allowed to even raise the questionable question of textual analysis. I hope this approach will be endorsed as legitimate by scholars of your status.

Scholars must also understand that Guru Granth Sahib is the latest record of Revelation. More importantly, it is the only authentic, detailed and complete such record available in the world. It is the only wholly authentic document of revelation in the entire history of mankind. As such, it can help followers of other revealed texts to interpret their own scriptures with greater clarity. There are ample hints in the Guru Granth Sahib that it is to be so used. Scholars must recognize in it, the immense potentiality of doing the greatest good to the largest number of believers. For this purpose, it is essential to preserve the purity and integrity of the original text. It is the common spiritual treasure of mankind, and we Sikhs have the responsibility and the great privilege of preserving, protecting and propagating it. It is an awesome responsibility and has to be discharged with scrupulous care and with unflinching faith in its intrinsic value.

OF RAHIT MARYADA

Rahit Maryada or the Sikh Code of Conduct has occupied a central place in the practice of Sikhism since the Baisakhi day of 1699. The moral and ethical laws of which it is a product, have been revealed in the *bani* of the Gurus since the ministry of the First Nanak. These provided the base upon which the Sikh society was built. The formal promulgation of *Rahit Maryada* was considered essential by the Tenth Nanak. Since then its solemn acceptance at the time of initiation to the faith (*amrit* ceremony) has been vital to a practising Sikh.

Those who have sought to dismantle the Order of The Khalsa,

have always struck at *Rahit Maryada*, correctly believing it to be its foundation. When the first order of extermination of the Sikhs was issued ('followers of Nanak be killed at sight'), simultaneously, by a general order, all Hindus and Rajput soldiers in the imperial army were asked to shave off their beards. Later on, an integral part of Lakhpat's attempt at wiping out the Sikhs, was to cut off their hair and beards. Our reply was articulated by Bhai Taru Singh. That is one reason why this young man's response to the situation was all that significant in Sikh History.

In the current phase of our existence, particularly since 1947, crude hints have been dropped to us by some vicious people who believe that they have stepped into the shoes of both Bahadur Shah and Lakhpat. Lala Achint Ram was one of them. Immediately after 1947, he tried to persuade Master Tara Singh's brother, professor Niranjan Singh to lead the movement of merging into Hinduism, by shaving off. It is significant that his son, an important political leader, advocated the extermination of the Sikhs during militant movement, citing the examples of another Asian country, Cambodia, which had wiped out one fifth of its own population. He also propagated general disarmament of the Punjab on the lines enforced by the Britishers after 1849. M. K. Gandhi's invectives against the Sikh *Rahit*, particularly the *kirpan*, dominated his overpublicized prayer meetings after independence. Dr Sangat Singh says, "A few days before his death, he explicitly wanted the Sikhs to tonsurise their *keshas*, sacred hair, discard Khalsa symbols, and merge in the general body of Hinduism. He showed his willingness to accord Guru Nanak the status of an *avatar* of Vishnu". Mrs. Sushila Nayyar's exhortation to that effect was more vocal and was equally vociferously rejected there and then by Sirdar Kapur Singh. "Baat Cheet", an official journal of the Indian Army, was similarly to equate every *amritdhari* Sikh with a terrorist slated for liquidation.

By and large, however, under the present dispensation, the attack is more subtle and better organised. It is led by chauvinistic people here and paid scholars abroad. These new Brahmins are pretending to teach Sikhism to the actual believers. By their definition, there is no well defined Sikh identity (Oberoi), and almost anyone who is dishonest enough to make a pretension of declaring himself a Sikh

for an ulterior purpose, is of necessity to be regarded as one (McLeod's "Who is a Sikh?").

Some of our own people are not lagging much behind, and the seemingly more orthodox amongst them are seeking to prescribe the length of the *kirpan*, mode of tying the turban, manner of maintaining the beard, colour of the clothes to be worn, and even what must or must not be eaten by a Sikh. Their motive, though entirely different from that of the wily assailants, is eventually equally harmful. Those who desire social and political prominence find that it comes more easily by flaunting their religiosity. The strategy is to make the common Sikh feel that he is not a good Sikh, since he does not strictly adhere to the certain non-essential icons which are in fact a superfluous vulgarization of the actual and meaningful Sikh symbols. It is not the Guru's *Rahit* that they want to establish but their own pre-eminence in Sikh religious, political and social affairs. In this category must be placed the ever increasing number of pseudo-saints who follow and preach a *Rahit* much different from the Guru's command or the consensus of the Guru Khalsa. They need to emphasize the difference between one *sant* and another, and between the flock of the one or the other. They need to invent reasons for their visibly separate existence, and acquire it easily by callously distorting the *Rahit*. The effort also includes a seemingly innocuous attempt at adding a few more *shabads* to the long settled daily prayers. The *ardas* (congregational supplication) is of course the most universally distorted of our texts.

The great Guru in his infinite divine wisdom gave us a hundred reasons to feel equal and together; we are, in our folly, exploring a thousand ways of establishing hierarchies and of feeling different and apart. It is for scholars to check this trend with the light of truth.

This situation is exploited by a sinister outsider group which formulates that no *amrit* was administered on the Baisakhi day of 1699, that no *Rahit* was actually prescribed. According to them, the concept of *Rahit* is primarily an encumbrance imposed on Sikhism by the Singh Sabha Movement of the nineteenth century and that it is, in many ways, still evolving. Every time our misguided religious enthusiasts add new commandments to the Guru's prescription, they do a yeoman's service to those who propagate the concept of ever evolving *Rahit*. Our selfish approach within provides a handle to our real enemies without. It provides them material with which to assail the work of the ten Masters,

particularly that of the Tenth, who formally laid down the code of conduct for the Order of the Khalsa.

It also facilitates the growth of schismatic sects which benefit in the general confusion and attract followers by drastically amending the *Rahit* to exploit the baser human instinct for laxity in such commitments.

Fortunately, the *Rahit* is well established, and what it comprises of, is well known. The Tenth Master's commands have travelled to us in an unbroken chain of tradition, continuing upto the present day. Its basic elements have been noted at the time of promulgation of the *Rahitnamas* by historians, poets, writers and preachers. Accounts nearest to the time exist. Even the most misused of texts, if filtered of later interpolations in the light of *gurbani*, clearly reveal an authentic recognizable kernel. After such basic scrutiny, the Guru Khalsa Panth is competent to authenticate the commandments of the Guru in the context of history and tradition.

'Rahurit Sub-Committee' of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) started working on the formal codification of the *Rahit* around 1931. Final draft was accepted on February 03, 1945 by the SGPC. In the intervening period, prominent Sikhs and important Sikh organizations from all over the world were consulted. Drafts of the *Rahit Maryada* were prepared by prominent scholars and were circulated to all concerned. Anybody who was somebody, was approached to give his opinion in the light of history and tradition. This great churning of the ocean, in which all Sikh *sangats* from India and abroad participated, yielded a small thirty four page document. Since then it has run many editions. It also contains a definition of a Sikh approved by all history, tradition and revelation. It was accepted after due deliberation by the Guru Khalsa Panth. It also lays down the exact wording of the *ardas*.

In my opinion, our researchers must accept this codification to be the basic primary document in all discussions having a bearing on the subject. They must not be swayed by the contemporary requirements of this or that charlatan, or a pseudo-saint or a *dera*. Similarly, it is not possible to have any controversy on what constitutes the *Mul Mantra*. Our scholars must be able to point out that its exact wording in the hand of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Ninth and the Tenth Gurus is

in existence even today. Shall we not discourage those trying to raise such controversies regarding the *Rahit Maryada*, and politely bring to their notice that their activity, being grounded in subjectivity, is detrimental to basic Panthic interests? If someone still persists in his attempts to cast doubts on the long settled question, that person must be taken to be a base schemer, rather than an honest researcher.

OF POLITY

In no other field have we let down the world as much as we have done in the field of politics. Our polity, as conceived by the Gurus, is the repository of some of the noblest truths of politics. The Order of the Khalsa was created to be an 'example and guide to mankind'. It was to inspire faith in and to hold out the possibility of, a world order in which every group or nation could live in perfect harmony, and in which every person of any faith could follow spiritual pursuits unhindered by political compulsions. We were to spearhead a movement leading to peace with all creation and arrange a decent sharing of the earth with the animal and the plant kingdoms. Khalsa was to be the defense of the defenseless, hope of the hopeless, honour of the humble, strength of the weak, refuge of the forsaken, and also in every other way, a true archetype (*khalsa mera roop hai khas, khalse me haun karo nivas*) of the compassionate Guru.

In the present century, we have witnessed, without reacting to the failure of at least three formidable political concepts and the movements they inspired. Secularism, with its anti-theistic strains (contributed by Thomas Paine and Richard Carlyle) claimed to offer a fresh theory of life and conduct (George Jacob Holyoak). It sought to promote human welfare solely by material means. Philosophically, it failed to distinguish between fact and value, and could not provide an ethical base for itself. It died unsung, as of course it should have. The fall of Godless Communism has been more dramatic. Its sand palace has simply collapsed around the ears of the most ardent communists of all times, namely, the Russians. Very broadly, Woodrow Wilson's concept of 'one nation one state' has also failed to provide relief to the struggling minorities all over the world. Together, these concepts and movements will be remembered as having caused miseries of the greatest magnitude to mankind. The two World Wars, bombing of Hiroshima, rise of Nazism, Jewish pogroms, decimation of Kurds, Serbs and Sikhs, mass murders in Poland and Russia, as evidenced by

the discovery of common graves, Tianamen Square massacre, weapons of large scale destruction, and consumerism are some of the more spectacular products of these movements. It should, therefore, be a matter of satisfaction for us, that 'the congregation of the polluted has been dispersed after futile attempts at perpetrating falsehood. Victory drum of the Immaculate One now reassuringly reverberates disseminating confidence'. (*uth gai sabha mallechh ki kar kooda pasar, danke baaje fateh ke nehhalkank avtar*).

We, the Khalsa, should have been roaring like lions to douse every fire, to silence every gun, to correct every imbalance, and to make life, honour and justice accessible to everyone everywhere. We should have arisen to build human relations anew on the strength of the fresh Sikh concepts and authentic insights into Reality. We should have been busy building bridges of understanding all over. We should have been available to all in whatever capacity we were needed. In between every trained gun and the oppressed, there should have been the bearded face of a Khalsa. Our intellectuals should find out the causes of our failure in this respect, and must suggest remedies. All tyrants everywhere must live in constant dread of the Khalsa (*sukh savan na dendi dujjana noo, naubat Gobind Singh sache patshah di*).

There is one field, namely, that of resisting tyranny of the majority, in which we have acquitted ourselves well. More than one hundred and twenty thousand people, the best of our youth have fallen on the field of battle. More than two hundred and fifty thousand have suffered long incarcerations while agitating peacefully. Many are still languishing in jails without any hope of ever seeing the light of day. This is a glorious record of suffering for a just cause. A very valuable chapter to our history has been added. The Sikh spirit has been true to itself in opposing injustice. Our martyrs include men (from the age of one year onwards), women and old men from all walks of life. This is an impressive record unparalleled by any other people anywhere else in the world.

The struggle raises a host of vital questions which learned people of your status and concerns must ponder over. How is it that we are forced to make such heavy sacrifices for securing the ordinary decencies of life which come as a matter of course to citizens of democracies? Is there something fundamentally wrong with the nature of 'the world's largest democracy'? Are those running it moral pygmies

or is democracy itself an unworkable proposition amongst the caste based, pollution and hatred ridden communal society? May be the multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-lingual nature of the country, renders it possible for the ruling majority to turn into beasts without the fear of retribution? Even after enduring a slavery of sorts for half a century, we have not fully worked out the implications of absolute political power falling into the lap of the votaries of Brahmanism. This philosophy, as is well known, is red in tooth and claw. No attempt has been made to devise ways and means of escaping its devouring nature, although all history testifies to it. Shall we forever go on living in the hope that this bowl of Mahakali will not demand more Sikh blood? Do we not know the fate of those nations which have lived on sufferance and charity?

It is for scholars like you to suggest how this unfortunate country can save itself from the hoofs of the goosestepping Brahmin-Kshatriya centaur?

We must also examine how and why we failed to meet the political challenges. None of the issues for which these hundreds of thousands have suffered, has been solved. On the surface, none of them is presently an issue with the present set of political leaders. Why did we have to spill bucketfuls of blood to merely raise issues which any other people would have just shouted a few sharp slogans to raise. Do we have a leadership sensitive to our political concerns? What is the nature of our decision making? How effectively do we deal with those who let us down at crucial times, or with those who plainly betray the people? What flaws of late have developed in our character which keep us from revolting against wrongs being done to us by our own unrepresentative leadership? How is it that a people born to the very first dawn of freedom and democracy in human history ungrudgingly accept imposed leadership?

Thirdly, we must ask what is our attitude towards those who fell at Amritsar in 1984 and others who died in the movement before and after that? Surely, those who embraced martyrdom around the Pool of Nectar, at the Guru's very door, are at par with Baba Gurbax Singh and Baba Deep Singh. That is their true status. The status of others is no less exalted, and they, too, must be accepted as martyrs of the faith. Their memory must be preserved in monuments and in our collective psyche. Every man, woman and child who died so that we

may live, must be accounted for. Small fruit orchards on village common lands must come up to commemorate them. The number of trees in the inner circle must correspond to number of martyrs from the village. It was suggested that a wall of black marble bricks should be built behind the Akal Takht. Each brick of which must bear the name of a martyr. This is a grand idea. We may qualify it with a suggestion that the names be inscribed in gold and that the wall itself should be in the shape of the half-moon in the fourteenth *kala*, signifying the ever ascending spirit of Sikhism.

At an appropriate place, may be just after the third paragraph, let us add just a sentence to the daily *ardas*. Let these words be:

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ, ਭੁਜੰਗੀਆਂ ਚੁਰਾਸੀ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਘਲੂਘਾਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਢਾਲ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਅਣਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਤਸੀਹੇ ਸਹੇ, ਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਟਾਇਰ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਸਜ਼ਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਮਰ ਘਾਲਨਾ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ, ਥੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ !

Let us thus make these facts bereft of rancour, lament, passion or mourning, a part of our daily congregational supplication.

Lastly, in this regard, we must have a thorough battle review. There are many opinions as to why we were pushed into the situation of the last bloody decade. The authentic Sikh point of view is yet to come. Though rather late in arriving, it appears to be coming through at last. Dr Sangat Singh's book from which I have quoted above, will perhaps be a forerunner in that regard. It is now also proper to conduct an enquiry into our failure to achieve the goals we had set for ourselves. We need desperately to know where we went wrong. The second round may be thrust upon us just as suddenly as the first one was. The bugle is on someone else's lips, and there is no knowing as to when it may be sounded. We must not be caught unawares again. 'You don't suffer if you rightly perceive the dangers ahead', cautions the Babar-vani verse. (*aggon de je chetiie ta kayat mile sajai*).

One of the basic causes of our political ineffectiveness has been the disgustingly unrepresentative character of our only political organization; the Shiromani Akali Dal. Throughout the crucial decade, it was deplorably faction-ridden. All groups were headed by self-appointed presidents, supported by nominated office bearers, nominated advisory panels, non-existent membership, and working committees composed of nominated sycophants. No one, who transgressed the

rules of the game, and refused to kowtow to the party boss, could survive in such an atmosphere. This situation prevails even today despite intervention by the Akal Takht; still there is no enrolment of membership, and election to party offices have not been held. Things have come to such a pass that a General Secretary gets up in a meeting of a Working Committee and announces, 'the party president has dictated the resolutions which I am going to read one by one. Everyone present will loudly sound the *jaikara* at the end in token of having supported them'. The suggestion, that perhaps even the *jaikara* could be a part of the dictation is taken to be insolent beyond measure. This is by no means peculiar to any particular Akali faction but is representative of the prevailing culture. It need not be emphasized that the situation is perfectly tailored for disaster.

Sensing this, the Akal Takht, the ultimate controller of Sikh political affairs, was petitioned to set matters right. The Akal Takht tried to restore the representative character of the Shiromani Akali Dal and to encourage it to distill its own political aim with the help of the people's representatives. It came within a short distance of success. Eventually, unfortunately, no significant improvement could be achieved.

This brings us to the need of streamlining the role of the Akal Takht and its Jathedar who has to bear such onerous burdens. Perhaps there should be an advisory panel consisting of learned persons, well versed in Sikh religion and history, to advise him on all issues. Their unanimous advice may be made mandatory. I say no more on the sensitive issue and leave it to this august gathering to devise ways and means of restoring it to its former glory. It is a unique institution which is charged with looking after the worldly interests of the Khalsa, and the Khalsa, we must keep in mind, has been created to serve humanity at large. It cannot fully discharge its function unless competent guidance is available to it from the great Takht of Akal created, in part, by the 'mighty and brave warrior, destroyer of hordes of evil doers and the great altruistic, benign Hargobind.' (*dalbhanjan gur soorma wad jodha bahu parupkar*). I believe there is none who is more competent to look into this matter than the present gathering of Sikh scholars from all over the world. It is a privilege which may not be taken lightly, for at the same time it is a tribute we can pay to the Sixth Nanak in the year of his 400th birth anniversary.

ON EDUCATION

Our performance in the field of education leaves much to be desired. Guru Nanak, like Mahatma Buddha before him, had adopted the language of the masses for conveying his message, and, in addition, had taken the trouble of providing it with an easily understood script which received instant acceptability. Many times in his *bani*, he stressed the importance of learning to read and write, proper education and of the spiritual merit of intellectual activity. Later Gurus were to carry forward the tradition of Guru Nanak, rightly deeming it to be a part of the Sikh tradition itself. Guru Angad himself would teach school children as a part of preaching. Very soon it came to be firmly believed in the Panth that a person engaged in copying and propagating the *bani*, and in promoting intellectual activity, deserved the best in both the worlds. This belief gave a fillip to the educational processes within the community, and learning became one expression of Sikh concept of piety. Schools became an integral part of the early Sikh shrines. Calligraphy was much encouraged particularly at the Sikh centers of pilgrimage. This activity reached its climax at the time of the Tenth Guru whose patronage of writers, poets and learned men was the envy of even the imperial court. He was soon able to claim that he had taken adequate care to educate all the elders and had so encouraged schooling that there was no one illiterate within the Sikh fold. (*bal birdh sabh sodh pathawa; kou anpadh rehan na paava*). He was perhaps the very first one amongst the prophets to claim that his entire following had become literate. This became the Guru's *birud*, a prominent purpose of his Guruship, and consequently, of the Sikh tradition. That is where the Khalsa, the Guru Khalsa Panth took over.

The mess we have created is there for all to see. By now, we should have eliminated illiteracy from at least the entire continent. We were the leaders in the literacy movement some five hundred years ago and remained as such for two centuries. Whatever happened to us after that? It was a great lead in a great field that our Gurus had given to us. We were the heirs to one of the greatest literacy drives in all history and we just turned our backs on our inheritance. Should we have fallen short of the Guru's expectations? This august gathering of scholars may like to enquire why we have become so self-destructive? Why are we following the suicidal path?

One does not have to be an astrologer to predict that education is the best thing that can happen to a threatened community like

the Sikhs. The example of the great Jewish nation is before us. They survived persecution of centuries on the strength of their achievements on the intellectual front. It was the pursuit of excellence and the deep faith in their revelation that saved them as it will save any other people so entrenched. This is the lesson of all history.

After having said all that, I also want to refer to an objection which is often raised, namely, that even today the percentage of education amongst the Sikhs is higher than that amongst any other community in India. That is hardly saying anything: we had an educating mission. Also, it is the number of illiterates amongst the Sikhs that should make us realize that we have not taken the Lord of the White Hawk seriously. An illiterate Sikh is a contradiction in terms. It should worry us no end that the phenomenon exists. What is more disturbing is the obvious lack of quality education institutions amongst us. Such schools and colleges as we have, are in many ways not quite of the desired standard. I see little effort to improve them. Evidence of our growing neglect is written all over our society. We very much lack a properly functioning system of educational management, and most of our premier institutions are staffed with half-educated non-believers, who could never be accused of spiritual leanings. From personal experience of three of our reputed institutions, I can say that we had better heed to the words of Baba Sheikh Farid recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, "It is folly which makes the farmer aspire to reap grapes of Bijaur, while all he has sown is a *keekar* (acacia) tree; it is folly indeed to process used coarse wool and to expect the end product to turn into fine silk". (*lorai dakh bijorian kīkar beejai jat, handai unn kataida paindha lorai patt*). That is a fair description of our effort in the field of education and what we expect out of it.

Let us have a very brief look at what the world around us is doing. It will give us a fair idea of the opportunities we are missing. Lingayats are a small peripheral sect in the vast sea of Hinduism. One of their ordinary Maths, Jagadguru Sri Veerasimhasana Peetha, is situated at Suttur in Nanjangud Taluk of Mysore. It is situated on the spot where Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeswara Mahaswamiji had done penance in the tenth century. This Math, having started the activity in 1963, is now providing quality education to one and all from creche to engineering and medical studies. Its educational work today is correctly described as 'greater than that of a university'. It is running three industrial training institutes, four polytechnic colleges, one en-

gineering college which is granting degrees up to the Doctor of Philosophy on a campus of one hundred and fifty acres next to the Manasa Gangotri Campus of the Mysore University, a medical college, a dental college, a college of pharmacy, one hospital and a host of other formal and even non-formal educational institutions. The list of institutions it patronizes, besides that is more than one hundred and fifty and runs into two pages with six columns each. I must repeat, it is one of the ordinary local Maths which operates in a defined area. Karnataka is studded with such Maths and the institutions they run.

It may come as no surprise to you that one fifth of the students of these institutions come from the Punjab, the land of Guru Nanak, the prophet who brought the Bhagirathi of education from heaven to earth, the Prometheus who defied men and gods to impart the warmth of discernment to mortals, the land of two hundred saints with hundreds of *deras* which are hundreds of years old, the land of Sikh Takhts and the incomparable Harmandar. Many of our holy places get more offerings than the Math at Suttur. What have we been doing with them? We are the ones whose Guru is the 'dispeller of darkness,' or the light of the world. I will urge this august gathering of the foremost amongst the concerned Sikhs to explore ways and means of ploughing back the money offered to the Guru for the welfare of the common Sikhs and the deprived of every denomination, whom he loved so much. It is his dictum that 'the proper receptacle for the offering to the Guru is the need of the unprivileged' (*garib da munh, guru di golak*). It is when we so conduct ourselves as to incessantly strive for the well-being of all everywhere, that we will become worthy of our motto of '*sarbat da bhala*' in our daily '*ardas*'; 'none can expect to attain salvation by mere professions, release is earned by meritorious deeds' (*galli bhishat na jaie chhutte karam kamai*), says Guru Granth.

What we need desperately is an educational commission with sufficient powers to set things right. It may form a part of the 1999 celebrations. It is for the scholars to find out what has dried up the springs of such welfare activity amongst us. Have we become a community of recluses, do we no longer care for the world around us?

DRUGS

There is yet another field in which we should have been the natural leaders. Is there another community in the whole wide world which has been effectively operating absolute ban on the use of drugs

within itself for the last five hundred years? A Sikh is universally deemed to be an apostate, if he so much as touches tobacco. The rest of the world has just become aware of the problem. Our gurdwaras must run de-addiction centers for the benefit of all. Sikhs must lead the rest in producing literature discouraging the use of drugs. We should also be the foremost in researching the harmful influence of drugs. These and similar things on these lines can only happen if enlightened people like you can put the Sikh concerns on the issue in proper historical and spiritual perspective. When we discuss the issue of *Rahit Maryada* later on during the course of this seminar, maybe we will hear more on the subject from our learned scholars.

HERITAGE

The question of our vanishing heritage and the related matter of excessive expenditure on gurdwara buildings raises certain issues which deserves proper discussion. I hope that by the time you are through with this seminar, you will be able to provide some of the answers. It is my estimate that, on the average, a dozen magnificent buildings and monuments connected with the Khalsa hegemony are destroyed by neglect every year. On one of my trips to the other side of the Punjab, I photographed half a dozen such monuments. Within the span of two years they have all gone. Rajasthan has opened institutes with sophisticated wherewithall to train people in preserving manuscripts, monuments, paintings, buildings and to resurrect the damaged ones. All over the world people are engaged in preserving their past; we remain content with calmly watching its destruction. Everyone of us must have heard of the valuable manuscripts which were reduced to paper pulp, mixed with clay and fashioned into minor household utility items. The matchless collection of manuscripts is rotting away at our premier Sikh institution, the Khalsa College, Amritsar. The administration is absolutely insensitive to the situation. More than a decade ago, priceless manuscripts and artifacts were carried away from Sri Darbar Sahib by the Indian army. We have made no efforts to retrieve them. I brought up the subject with the Prime Minister of India in early 1991 and he readily agreed to return them; though the then Governor of the Punjab dragged his feet. Before I could pursue things effectively, a great political change occurred which swept away much, amongst that the possibility of retrieving a part of our past. That valuable material is now awaiting claimants in some military cantonment somewhere. Our wall paintings are fading away.

Our artifacts and historically valuable memorabilia are being thrown around all over England and Europe. Amongst them is reported to be the aigrette of the Tenth Lord. Can we ever become more callous? When I visited Paonta Sahib about a decade ago I saw the pen used by Guru Gobind Singh lying unattended in a fragile glass box at the entrance to the shrine.

The most priceless manuscript, the only one of its kind in the entire history of mankind, the Bir at Kartarpur, is being used as a totem pole to attract cash offerings and is slowly decaying. One of the ancient rare Birs is in regular use at the first floor of Sri Harmandar. A mirror used by the Tenth Guru is given to anyone to hold at Damdama Sahib. Weapons of our Gurus are handled daily at several shrines. Some are washed regularly. Water from the Godawari is ceremoniously brought early in the morning for the purpose at Hazur Sahib. Will they be able to last to eternity with such treatment? Must they not? Host of issues of the kind will arise when you become conscious of these and allied facts. It is high time we woke up to the situation. We are being deprived of all those priceless objects touched by the prophets of God. Bit by bit, they are being destroyed. All the wealth of the world will not be able to bring them back again.

I have seen the remains of *pacca bagh* Dhanaula, those of the Sheranwala Gate Patiala, the Sarhandi Gate bridge, the Thanda Buraj Sarhind and the Bahadurgarh Gurdwara being carted away to be used as rubble. I know that is the fate which befell the mud fortress at Chamkaur Sahib. I heard that the *peepal* tree under which the Tenth Guru used to hold court at Paonta Sahib was cut up and used as firewood. It will pain you much to know that the suave building of Gurdwara Jyoti Sarup at Sarhind is no more. The main shrine has been replaced by an ugly marble structure, the outer gateway will be soon pulled down. The original hearth at Guru-ka-mahal was pounded to dust by the '*kar seva*' people, and the wall and the peg used by Guru Amardas for praying were similarly wiped out of existence. Much can be said against the unbridled concept of destructive '*kar seva*'. A committee of enlightened people and architects must be formed to clear all cases before buildings are taken up for reconstruction. Proceedings of the committee must be open and must be well advertised. Perhaps the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee can be persuaded to make some such arrangements if a conclave of serious scholars like you indicate that it favours the suggested procedure.

The over-emphasis on the gurdwara buildings and the incurring of excessive expenditure on construction needs to be curbed immediately. Perhaps the needs of the local community, their finances and the strict defining of necessary adjuncts of holy places according to Sikh philosophy, are the factors which should be taken into account. There is a lot here for the scholar to do. He must dig deep into the tradition and the philosophy of Sikhism, and must be able to point out the norms which have been followed by us throughout the centuries.

ENVIRONMENT

A Sikhs cannot neglect the environment. The message of Sikhism is most relevant in the present age of ecological crisis. Man, created in the image of God, is the master of species (*avar jon teri paanhari; is dharti meh teri scekdari*). According to *gurbani* he has been endowed with a discerning moral nature and a profound sense of religion. As an ethical being and a part of nature, he has the responsibility of protecting all other species. Living in harmony with nature is an obligation to be taken seriously, for his deeds in the world are relevant to his salvation. The Guru's love of nature permeates his entire *bani*. Guru Nanak's Baramaha is a truly inspired song of a profound nature lover. So is his celebrated *Arti* which is a great tribute to the Creator of the vast and bewildering yet the most fascinating and elevating expanse of the universe. To a layman like me it is plain that it would greatly please the Guru if his Sikhs approach the grandeur of nature with awe, wonder and gratitude. They must respectfully look to it for inspiration and for revealing the mysteries of the unknown. Though it has inspired great poetry in Professor Puran Singh and Bhai Vir Singh, this aspect of *gurbani* has, by and large, remained neglected. Perhaps the scholars we have here would like to enquire why it is so?

Eminent scholars of Sikh studies have gathered here. It is hoped that they will scan the rich Sikh heritage to reiterate its universal concerns. The world ameliorating teachings of the Great Gurus are well worth discussing. It is with this great expectation that I have come to this distinguished gathering. I thank the Institute for giving me this opportunity of interacting with you and thank you all for a very patient hearing.

Section I
HOMAGE

SARDAR DALJEET SINGH — A HOMAGE

Dr Kharak Singh

Sikhism, in its brief history of a little over five centuries, has faced numerous challenges, social and political as well as ideological. This was to be expected, since Guru Nanak launched his revolution by challenging the prevailing unjust social and political order, which sanctioned and perpetuated inequality, exploitation and injustice. The movement continued in relative peace with no visible confrontation with the State or the political authority during the sixteenth century. Early in the seventeenth century, however, the Imperial Government of the time saw the political potential of the movement, and considering it a threat to its authority, adopted a policy of 'nipping the evil in the bud.' The martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev, encounters of Guru Har-gobind with the Moghal Forces, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, and Guru Gobind Singh's battles with the State armies clearly show the intentions and the policy of the rulers. These events also leave no doubt about the determination of the Gurus and their followers to continue the fight against injustice and oppression to a successful conclusion undaunted by any odds. During this period, the movement was led by the Gurus themselves. The seventeenth century saw the worst repression of Sikhs. Although early in this century Sikhs, under Banda Singh Bahadur, had established their authority over large parts of North India, the situation did not last long. Banda was captured and beheaded in Delhi along with seven hundred devoted Sikhs. Sikhs were declared outlaws, and a price was put on every Sikh head. It was the declared policy of the state to exterminate the *Nanak panthis*, root and branch. The policy was followed vigorously and enthusiastically by the State functionaries, and there were official pronouncements a couple of times to the effect that Sikhs had been liquidated and that there were no Sikhs left any more. It is on record that one time there were only two thousand Sikhs left in the jungles of Kahnauwan Marsh lands. But the Sikhs survived, and the Khalsa produced men who kept the flag flying. Banda Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Kapur Singh were among the men of the century. Through their sacrifices and able

guidance, they led the Panth to power and greatness. Leaders of the *Misls* made their contribution. Ultimately, it was Maharaja Ranjit Singh who consolidated the scattered forces, and set up a formidable empire in the Punjab and the neighbouring areas of North India. These were the men of the eighteenth century. The Panth touched the height of political prowess and glory in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the second half of the last century, Sikhs not only lost this hegemony due to treachery of some leaders, but also faced new threats and challenges to their very existence as a distinct and independent faith. This challenge came from foreign missionaries, who established themselves under the protective wings of the British rulers, the *Arya Samaj* and the *Ahmadiyahs*. The ideological danger was far more serious than the political danger. But the attack was met adequately by men of humble origin like Gyani Ditt Singh, who stemmed the tide and kept the Panth on its rails. They may justifiably be called the men of the nineteenth century.

The ideological challenge was revived almost a century later, when again a group of missionaries mounted their attack. They started a Christian Centre of Sikh Studies at Batala. It needs to be noted that the Christian missionaries considered Sikh studies more important than studies on Christianity. Why were they more interested in Sikh studies? That is quite clear from their activities and the publications of those who organised the Centre. Their object was to discover or invent holes or vulnerable areas in the Sikh ideology, which could be exploited to push their own faith. Apparently, they could not find anything lacking in the teachings of the Gurus. But, that did not deter them. They could certainly invent something to mislead the masses and the simple Sikhs of the rural areas. That also did not work, for Guru Nanak had ingrained the lesson in their minds that man would be judged in God's Court on the basis of his own deeds. They would not, therefore, accept any notion of a Prophet having paid for their sins, and that they should, therefore, accept him as their saviour. The missionaries, however, did not give up. They brought out a series of books misrepresenting the Sikh doctrines and distorting Sikh history, using language that confused not only the common man, but even some scholars who did not have a strong Sikh background. Although the writings of these self-appointed interpreters of Sikhism struck at its very roots, they were hailed as genuine scholars of Sikhism by some Sikhs and one of our Universities,

set up to propagate the universal message of Guru Nanak, even honoured one of them with a doctorate *honoris causa*. Not only did they co-operate with their killers, they even expressed their gratitude for striking deadly blows.

Let us recall some of the things these 'Missionary Friends' have been saying about Sikhism:

"Guru Nanak did not found a new religion. He was only a part of the Indian *Bhakti* movement. He preached what could be considered an amalgam of *Vaishnavism* and *Nathism* or *Nir-gun Sampradya*. He was a Hindu, and only wanted to reform Hinduism by removing some of its undesirable features like the caste system. Even in this task, he, and the subsequent Gurus, were not serious, since they did not make any *jat* as Guru. Although Guru Nanak preached against ritualism and pilgrimage, his successors undid everything and introduced new rituals and established places of pilgrimage. Guru Nanak was a pacifist and stressed interiority of religion. He did not approve of the use of force even for a just cause. Militancy in Sikhism came due to large scale influx of *jats* into its fold during the guruship of Guru Arjun, and Guru Hargobind was forced to accept the policy to accommodate his new disciples. Certainly, it was not his own choice. Later the *keshas*, the *kirpan* and other K's were also introduced in the Sikh *rahit* by the *jats*. Guru Gobind Singh did not issue any such command. There is no historical evidence that Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa and administered *amrit* to the *Panj Piaras* on the *Baisakhi* day of 1699. There is no authentic *bir* of Guru Granth Sahib. The *bir* at Kartarpur is a copy in which changes have been made to suit later requirements of the Panth. Guru Arjun performed the *mundan* ceremony of his son (Guru) Hargobind, and composed a hymn on that occasion which was included in the Aad Granth. This hymn was obliterated by Sikhs, since it did not fit into the later system which banned shaving. Guru Arjun or Guru Tegh Bahadur did not become martyrs for any spiritual or religious cause. They were just murdered. Sikhs are Hindus. The Singh Sabha Movement in the last century was not a revival. They introduced a new brand of Sikhism which had nothing to do with the teachings of Guru

Nanak. It was they who installed the Granth Sahib as Guru. Guru Gobind Singh had issued no such command. It was they who foisted the Khalsa *rahit* on the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh had nothing to do with it. Sikhs and Hindus had lived in amity for ages. Bhai Kahn Singh, by writing the booklet "*Ham Hindu Nahin Hain*" (We are not Hindus) ruined the relations between the two communities, and derailed the Panth. Sikhs have always worshipped and continue to worship Sakhi Sarvar, Gugga Pir, ancestors, etc., as much as their Gurus. And so on....."

The Christian missionaries started as early as 1968, with their first book, "Guru Nanak and His Religion." The campaign of misrepresentation of Sikhism, and distortion of its history and ideology has continued unabated ever since. In fact, it has been intensified, because the group has been able to hire some mercenaries with outward appearance of Sikhs to do the job. They have been awarded university degrees and even appointed to Chairs of Sikh Studies created in some universities in U.S.A. and Canada with contributions from unsuspecting Sikhs.

Sardar Daljeet Singh was the first to see through this. He took notice of the 1968 publication, and could see that more was coming. He approached the Universities in Punjab to do something about the damage that was being caused through the activities of the missionary group. It is a sad commentary, however, that the learned scholars and professors did not raise even their little finger to halt this campaign of mis-information against the Sikh religion. Instead, they were happy that some white men were doing research on Sikhism, and they organised functions to honour the missionaries.

When efforts to wake our own scholars failed, Sardar Daljeet Singh took the challenge on himself. He had retired from a distinguished career in the Indian Administrative Service in 1969, the year Guru Nanak's 500th birth anniversary was being celebrated all over the world. He committed himself completely to the cause of Sikh studies. He discussed the challenge with his friends and other like-minded people, particularly Sardar Jagjit Singh, and Justice Gurdev Singh, who was then President of the Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture, Patiala. The result was the publication of the now well-known book

"Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition", edited by Justice Gurdev Singh and published by the Academy. In this book, leading Sikh scholars, including Sardar Daljeet Singh, Dr Ganda Singh, Dr Hari Ram Gupta, Sardar Jagjit Singh, and others, completely demolish the formulations of the missionaries, mentioned in this note. To complete the rebuttal, Sardar Daljeet Singh wrote his book "Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir," after a thorough study of it. The book is a masterpiece of research and scientific investigation which leaves no doubt about the authenticity of the *Bir*.

That was not, however, the end of the struggle. The malefactors spread their tentacles internationally, and found traitors and mercenaries who had no love for Sikhism, although they went about as Sikhs. The attacks intensified. These had to be met on a more organised basis. So, the now too familiar Institute of Sikh Studies was established in 1989 to take up the challenge. Sardar Daljeet Singh was the founder member and he continued to be the guiding spirit of the Institute until his death. The Institute started a bi-annual (now it is quarterly) research journal, "Abstracts of Sikh Studies" in 1991, which has been covering latest research on Sikhism and dealing with all current issues of importance to Sikh religion, history and philosophy. The Institute has also published a respectable body of literature in the form of books and pamphlets which provides authentic information on Sikhism, and which has exposed the designs of enemies of Sikhism. As a result, some of the pseudo-scholars have been brought to book, summoned at the Akal Takht, indicted and awarded *tankhah*. The Sikh community is now alert as never before. Professional scholars seem to have their compulsions. Amateur scholars have, however, taken up the challenge to Sikh identity.

Although Sardar Daljeet Singh had to devote a major part of his time and effort to answer critics of Sikhism, it would be wrong to conclude that his role was purely defensive. He made tremendous contribution not only towards understanding the Sikh ideology, but also towards comparative study of religion. He isolated the major elements of religion, and standardised a methodology for a systematic study of religious faiths. He used it himself to demonstrate what each religious tradition stands for. On this basis, he showed how Sikhism differs from other religions on the concept of the Ultimate Reality, goals of the spiritual seeker, methodology to achieve the goals and the

overall world-view. He thus established the ideological identity of Sikhism as never before. This will go down in the history of religious thought as a major contribution.

Some of the features of Sikhism highlighted in Sardar Daljeet Singh's writings are:

WHOLE-LIFE RELIGION: Religious faiths are broadly divided into two major categories, viz., whole-life religions and dichotomous or salvation religions. The former cover the entire gamut of human activities, take the world as real, and advocate full participation in life, individual as well as social. The latter regard the world as an illusion or unreal, or an entanglement or a suffering. Their aim is merely to liberate man from the world through monastic or ascetic practices for his personal salvation, with no concern for society, and little role for morality or ethics. Sikhism clearly belongs to the category of whole-life religions and, thus, has nothing in common with any of the earlier Indian systems which are dichotomous, and which advocate the goal of personal salvation only.

GOAL OF LIFE: Traditionally, the goal of spiritual effort of man has been considered to be attainment of eternal bliss, liberation of the soul, merger with the Ultimate Reality, or attainment of Heaven after death. Guru Nanak gave an entirely different goal for the spiritual seeker, viz., that of a *sachia* or *gurmukh*, who recognises the Altruistic Will of *Waheguru*, or the Wonderful Creator, and not only accepts it, but makes positive efforts towards its operation as His instrument. The mystic experience of Guru Nanak saw God as Love. In His love, He created the universe and human beings. In His love He looks after His creation and is immanent in it. He is the Loving Father. He is the True King, and ensures justice and equality to all. While He loves everybody, He also punishes the oppressors and perpetrators of cruelty and injustice. A *gurmukh* serves His Will actively. He is not motivated by any selfish goal of personal salvation or personal bliss. He does not believe in nothingness as implied in *nirvan*, or merger as advocated by some religious leaders.

SIKH HERMENEUTICS: Some scholars have succeeded in creating confusion over the interpretation of the Guru's message. Taran Singh suggests six different *paralis*. On the basis of different interpretations, McLeod lists several categories of Sikhs. He has gone

to the ridiculous length of saying that even *patits* are a category of Sikhs, which is clearly a contradiction in terms. Sardar Daljeet Singh was very clear that there are no two categories of Sikhism. There is only one Sikhism, which is explained clearly in *Gurbani*, and demonstrated by Guru Nanak in ten different human forms over a period of 239 years of history to furnish guidance for individual as well as collective conduct in diverse situations. The *shabad* embodied in Guru Granth Sahib is the Guru. Everything has to be tested on this touchstone, and anything not approved by *Gurbani* cannot be accepted as part of Sikhism.

MARTYRDOM: Martyrdom is in-built in Sikhism, Guru Nanak calls life a 'Game of Love'. He says:

"If the game of love excites you,
Enter my lane with thy head on thy palm.
When you step on this path,
Offer your head and entertain no fear or second thoughts."

You can participate in this game, only if you have killed your ego. Guru Nanak says "Ego stands between man and God." After death of ego there are no more deaths, an egoless person does not care for his own comfort, to him, all is God's sweet Will. That is why he can love and care for others to the extent of giving his own life for justice to them. When you love somebody, you cannot be a passive witness to excesses being committed on him. You have to enter the battle against injustice which may demand your life. And, for a Sikh of the Guru there is no going back. Martyrdom as a concept or ideal was unknown in earlier Indian history. Even the word *shahid* is not Indian in origin. The Gurus gave us this great gift of martyrdom. Guru Arjun became the first martyr in our history to be followed by Guru Tegh Bahadur and the long chain of the Gurus' disciples who laid down their lives in the cause of love and justice.

DASAM GRANTH: One thing that exercised his mind during the last days of his life, was the controversy over the Dasam Granth. He wrote an article on the history of the *granth*, which we published in the July, 1994 issue of the Abstracts. In that article, he showed that the compilation that goes under the name Dasam Granth, was in fact never made by the Tenth Master himself. It appeared a few decades after his demise. He was very clear that while the *granth*

contains, *inter alia*, some *bani* of the Tenth Master, there are compositions which cannot be considered his creation. He strongly believed that portions that sanctioned *avtaarvad*, or promoted worship of gods and goddesses, or eulogised indulgence in mundane activities, cannot be attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, since these notions are opposed to the teachings embodied in Guru Granth Sahib, which is the Eternal and Living Guru of the Sikhs, appointed by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Sardar Daljeet Singh wanted the controversy to be resolved by the Panth at the highest level. Otherwise, some of the concepts introduced in the *granth*, could do incalculable harm to the integrity of the faith and the future of the Sikh Panth.

SIKH THEORY OF EVOLUTION: Sardar Daljeet Singh's interpretation of the Guru's theory of evolution shows his deep understanding of *Gurbani*. He had grasped the Guru's message as very few others have done. According to *Gurbani* man is not a born sinner or born out of sin. Neither is he condemned to doom. The Gurus explain that under the influence of *haumein* (ego), man is at the *manmukh* stage, but is destined to reach the ultimate stage of a *gurmukh*, who has no ego and lives truthfully, carrying out the Altruistic Will of the Creator. Practice of Sikhism is a process of evolution from *manmukh* to *gurmukh*. Every seeker is destined to achieve the *gurmukh* stage. This offers hope to all, and lends optimism to the Sikh faith.

NAAM: In a brilliant exposition of the doctrine, he explains that *Naam* is not just muttering of a word, as alleged by some critics. It represents the immanence of the Creator in His creation. It leads to realisation of the Fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man. In fact, it is God's love for man, which a Sikh is supposed to share.

It is difficult to give a comprehensive list of Sardar Daljeet Singh's contributions to the field of Sikh studies. Apart from his several articles and pamphlets, he produced the following major works on Sikhism:

- Sikhism: A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism
- The Sikh Ideology
- Essentials of Sikhism
- Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir and the Integrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism

All these publications are landmarks in the history of Sikh studies, and shall ever remain indispensable reference books for scholars. There is no doubt that Sardar Daljeet Singh ranks among the greatest exponents of Sikh philosophy.

Sardar Daljeet Singh came at a time comparable to the one during the last century, when Giani Ditt Singh and his associates successfully faced the onslaught on Sikh ideology from hostile quarters. History has repeated itself during the present century, when again such elements raised their heads to confuse the common man about the nature of Sikhism, its goals and content, and to reduce it to a sect of Hinduism, or a syncretism of diverse faiths, with no original contribution. The challenge has been much more subtle and much better organised during the present century. Sardar Daljeet Singh was the man who stemmed the tide. It was he who not only alerted the Sikh nation, but also led a crusade against the threats, overt and covert, to its identity and survival. He is indeed — Man of the Century.

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DALJEET SINGH – MY YOUNGER BROTHER

Hardyal Singh

Ours has always been considered a small family. Two brothers and a sister. Daljeet Singh was the youngest. Father had joined the State Forces of Maharaja of Bikaner way back in the eighteen eighties as a semi-educated Sepoy. He educated himself while in service. During his tenure of service, he fought along side the British Army in Somaliland – then an English Colony in North East Africa, where there was a local uprising. He also served in China during the Boxer Movement when Nationalist Forces had threatened the Embassies of Western Powers in Peking. He as a Commandant of the Bikaner Camel Corps, also served in Mesopotamia during the First World War (1914-18). His services in the Army must have been of exceptional quality, that on his retirement in 1918 after the end of the First World War he had risen to the rank of Lt. Col., awarded the title of Sardar Bahadur by the Viceroy of India and the Medal of O.B.I. (Order of British India) by the British Government.

Throughout his life, he was a vegetarian and a teetotaler, the latter habit luckily inherited by both his sons. One thing he imbibed during his service was the value and love of education. Our sister, the eldest among us, was sent to the lone boarding school for girls in Punjab (Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya) at Ferozepur, when she was barely 9 years old. This was a time when in Punjab even day schools for boys were few and far between.

Based on father's record of Military Service, both his sons after schooling could easily have been accepted as Officer Cadets for training at Sandhurst (England). Father felt, however, that his sons must go in for higher studies. High School level of education for him was much too insufficient, even in those days.

On retirement from service in 1918, father decided to settle at Tarn Taran, the Tehsil Headquarters about 5 km from our village Kang. There was a Municipal Middle School in this town – the only

school outside the District Headquarters of Amritsar. Daljeet Singh was admitted in the 4th class and myself in 6th. By the time I completed the Middle Class, Father had managed to establish High School Classes in Tarn Taran in collaboration with other Sikh gentry of the town. Daljeet Singh and myself after completing Matriculation in 1926 and 1924 respectively, did our F.Sc. from Khalsa College, Amritsar. Thereafter, I got admission to Banaras Hindu University for an Engineering Degree and Daljeet Singh continued his studies for a Graduation in Science. Thereafter, we both took Competitive Examinations. I joined Indian Railway Service of Engineers and Daljeet Singh the Punjab Civil Service.

An interesting tale hangs around the days when Daljeet Singh was preparing for the Competitive Examination. He was then staying with me at Jamalpur (Bihar), where Railways had their largest Locomotive workshop and an equally large residential colony. In those days — early thirties — most of the Officers and Supervisory Staff were either British or Anglo-Indians. That winter in 1932, an English crystal gazer visited Jamalpur. He was answering three questions for a specified fee. The question uppermost in the minds of the two brothers was Daljeet Singh's success possibility in the coming Competitive Examination. The crystal gazer looked hard at the crystal and to add to our visible concern, took inordinately long to make up his mind. Finally, after heaving a sigh of relief he told us that he had seen Daljeet Singh squeezing through, just about, very narrowly indeed. When the results were declared only three vacancies were to be filled. Daljeet Singh stood third but 3rd and 4th both had equal marks. In the case of a tie, the rules then provided that the higher marks in English would be the deciding factor. Daljeet Singh was lucky to have this advantage. The authenticity or otherwise of the crystal gazer and others of his ilk has ever since rankled the minds of the two brothers who disbelieved in miracles.

I had joined service in 1931 and Daljeet Singh in 1933. From the very beginning, our areas of service career were distantly situated. Daljeet Singh's sphere of work remained confined within the changing boundaries of Punjab and mine in Bengal, Bihar and the Southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Since I had certain facilities of travel, I visited Daljeet Singh every year during Puja holidays. This enabled us to compare notes about the books we

had read and the events the world was witnessing.

The first quarter of the twentieth century had produced 'mighty minds'. Rutherford had split the 'atom' which so far was thought to be the smallest individual part of the matter. Huxley had initiated his own philosophy of human behaviour and his book 'Brave New World' was making the rounds of all world libraries. H.G. Wells, producing the most believable science fictions, took us to the Moon almost five decades ahead of Neil Armstrong. Bernard Shaw with his piercing wit was cutting through many a more of that period, besides advocating his Fabian Socialism. Somerset Maugham was spinning out his own brand of lovable stories. The followers of Karl Marx were making history in Russia causing strong favourable ripples in the minds of many a thinker and writer of that time. And finally in the thirties, in spite of the glow of these mighty minds, the world was inexorably pushed towards a World War where crores lost their lives, and millions were slaughtered — a War which had to be ultimately ended by the actual use of Atom Bombs on helpless humans.

In India, during that time, the Gandhian Movement for Indian Independence had become widespread with the result that educated Indian minds had become highly politicised. During our annual meetings, we brothers had an abundance of topics to talk about, against my simplistic explanations of national and international events, Daljeet Singh would most annoyingly come up with odd explanations which I usually found difficult to accept and equally difficult to rebut. In retrospect, it can be said that the sharpening of Daljeet Singh's analytic mind had begun.

By the mid-forties when the War was reaching its end, Daljeet Singh's reading habits had changed to Philosophy. This was a subject alien to my engineering trained mind. Philosophy appeared meaningless — a mere jumble of words leading to little benefit, temporal or spiritual. Daljeet Singh took pains to discipline my protesting mind. His persuasive arguments would continue long through many of my holiday nights. Net result, however, was that I purchased a book entitled, "Philosophy for our Times" by Joad. Like Isaacs Asimov, who in the sixties popularised the understanding of astronomy and cosmology among laymen, Joad, too, earlier, had a number of publications to his credit popularising philosophy. This book with its heavily sidelined

frayed pages still forms a part of my tiny home library. It now stands as a symbol of Daljeet Singh's range of interests and his keenness to impart them to others.

It is a matter of sadness that philosophy has disappeared from the curriculum of many Indian Universities. It is perhaps not realised that for a close perception of trends and events, test of Philosophy is a valuable tool. This is particularly relevant when mankind is now adopting rapid changes in society, in manner of governance, in dismantling old mores and introducing new institutions.

During the decade following the end of the World War and subsequent partition of the country and its traumatic effect in Punjab and its administration, there was hardly any time left for the Punjab Civil Service Officers to pursue their outdoor or indoor hobbies. It was only in mid-fifties that Daljeet Singh was able to revive his habit of reading but this time the study of philosophy took a back seat. On one of my annual sojourns to his place I found a thick hard-back book on his table. It was an English translation of the Vedas. Every evening of my vacation he would read out marked passages from the Vedas, which he thought were of particular relevance to the present day and its problems. During the next few years he covered the study of various other Western and Indian religions. He was particularly impressed by Moses, Judaism and Hazrat Mohammad's Islam. In his later writings, he labelled these two religions along with Sikhism as 'Activist' religions. Christianity and the chief Indian religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, Vaishnavism, etc., were classified as 'Pacifist' religions. A large part of his post retirement studies and writings were interconnected with this classification and the weaknesses and strengths that flow from these viewpoints.

The last few years of his service career were the busiest. As a Financial Commissioner of the newly created Union Territory of Chandigarh, his responsibility needed endless meetings in Delhi and in Chandigarh to keep pace with the growing needs of a new capital city. Later, as Education Secretary of the Punjab, he was actively engaged in nursing the Punjabi University at Patiala, and later he played a vital role in establishing Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar.

On his retirement at the end of 1969, he and his wife joined us at our family farm in the Tarai Sector of the Western U.P., where we

had built a place to pass the remaining leases of our lives. During our service career, my wife had acquired in Calcutta a four part Guru Granth Sahib i.e., the Guru Granth Sahib was divided in four hard-back 'Pothis'. On every page, meanings of some difficult words were also given. Daljeet Singh took fancy to these 'Pothis'. He took them one by one and studied them page by page and line by line, making notes all the time. Considering that it took him nearly three to four years to complete reading the four 'Pothis', he could hardly be getting through a single page in a day. What this study was about he never told us. This unusual lengthy involvement with each page of Guru Granth Sahib became a common joke among family and friends. It was difficult to understand why a literate person should take a year or more to complete reading one 'Pothe' i.e., one fourth of Guru Granth Sahib. It was many years later that I realised the value of this laborious and devoted study, when in his later writings and discussions, it greatly helped him to formulate the true ethical contents of Sikhism.

After nearly four years of farm life, Daljeet Singh became restless. He said he wanted to engage himself in some writing on religion but he did not have the support of a library there. He made a couple of trips to Chandigarh, and as soon as his house at Chandigarh fell vacant, he shifted there finally.

At Chandigarh, he soon had so much reading and writing to do that twenty four hours a day were hardly sufficient for his self-imposed scholarly pursuit. In the year 1987, his trend-setting book 'Sikhism: A Comparative Study', was published.

It is not for me to comment on the merits of this publication, but I must express the effect it had on me. I was brought up in a Sikh school where by the time we completed our matriculation we had learnt by heart the five '*Nit-Name-Banis*'. Three times a year we had to attend *Nagar Kirtans* reciting '*Shabads*' all the way and every day we attended religious discourses by our school *Gyani Jee*. In short, I considered myself properly imbibed with Sikhism and its scripture. It was on reading Daljeet Singh's book that I suddenly found myself totally ignorant of the true tenets of Sikhism, and for the first time understood the foundation on which Sikhism was based by Guru Nanak Dev and nursed by the following nine Gurus.

After the formation of the Institute of Sikh Studies, of which Daljeet Singh was a leading light, his residence took on the atmosphere of a Coffee House. They came in ones, they came in twos and threes and often in large numbers for meetings. They were writers, scholars, thinkers, professors, students and sometimes public men from various walks of life. It was a pleasure to watch Daljeet Singh develop a view-point with unparalleled patience and precision. His earlier study of world religions and word-by-word knowledge of Guru Granth Sahib would add lustre and authority to his already effective arguments. He worked nearly eighteen hours a day, writing, discussing and studying. Single-handedly he took on the responsibility of disabusing the prevalent incorrect impressions of Sikh religion and its ethics amongst international schools and religions. For this purpose, he also organised a number of Seminars in Western Universities. Here was a man who sought no honours, no publicity, no reward or position. If ever there was a man who performed selfless service, here was one in flesh and blood.

They say that behind every successful man there is a woman. It was true in Daljeet Singh's case too. My sister-in-law Amarjit Kaur single-handedly undertook the running of the household and all its attending chores. She also looked after the up-bringing of two school going grandchildren who are living with her. The pressure of serving the Coffee House visitors was also borne by her. She smilingly served each and every guest with tea and snacks. And when discussions continued till lunch or dinner time, she provided meals at an incredibly short notice. In spite of her frail health she uncomplainingly attended to all the needs of a bustling home and a restless husband.

Her greatest contribution to our family lay in the fact that for nearly twenty five long years, she shouldered the full responsibility of looking after our ageing parents both of whom lived upto the ripe old age of hundred plus. She looked after them as if they were her own and in return our parents felt her home as their own. This is a performance as noble and rare as can be expected from any daughter-in-law past or present.

Over the last two decades, Daljeet Singh had shown no signs of a heart problem. He outraced me on our evening walks and never showed any signs of tiredness in his long working hours. Then one

fateful mid-day (8-10-94) he was struck with a massive heart attack, and before the day was out, he had bidden farewell to this world. For unknown reasons, the moving finger had given the call to the youngest of the family. His friends, admirers and co-workers must have felt his loss in varying degrees, but for his grieving family the following Urdu couplet comes repeatedly to mind.

You who are leaving the full gathering.
Take the moon and the stars with you
We shall manage with just the autumn days.
You may take the spring with you

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

~ ~ ~

CHANCE HAPPENING OR DESTINY?

Jagjit Singh

Sometimes some chance happenings lead to historical consequences. This is exactly how Sardar Daljeet Singh came to make his invaluable contribution to the Sikh studies. Although he had been taking keen interest in both Indian and western philosophy for a long time, he had then no idea that he would be called upon to meet a challenge to Sikh theology from some western scholars. It happened this way.

Sardar Daljeet Singh owned some land in the Terai area of U.P., from where he had come to Delhi on some business. When returning back to his farm, he picked up casually at the bus stand a newspaper published at Delhi to while away his time during the bus journey. It is surprising that this paper contained a review, by the well-known journalist S. Khushwant Singh, of Dr McLeod's controversial book "Evolution of the Sikh Community." This book, as is widely known by now, challenges some of the basics of Sikh theology and history, and S. Khushwant Singh supported Dr McLeod's thesis, rather in a manner that provoked Sikh sentiment.

Sardar Daljeet Singh was very much perturbed on reading the review, and so were all other Sikh gentlemen when it was brought to their notice. It was then decided at Chandigarh to approach some noted Sikh scholars and request them to take up the academic challenge to the Sikh theological identity posed by the book. The late Justice Gurdev Singh, Major General Gurbakhsh Singh, Sardar Daljeet Singh and myself did approach personally some known scholars of Sikhism. After waiting for some time, when nothing tangible seemed likely to come out of these contacts with scholars, Sardar Daljeet Singh made up his mind to take upon himself the onerous task of elucidating some knotty issues of Sikh religion and ideology, and prevailed upon me, too, to put down in writing my view-point concerning the history of the Sikh movement.

I continue to speculate to this day that, had Sardar Daljeet Singh not picked up casually that particular newspaper which contained the provocative review, it is quite on the cards that the book might not have come to his notice at all at his remote village or might have come so at some delayed period; and, consequently, the chain-reactions to the book among the Sikhs that started at his initiative might have met a similar fate. Was it chance or destiny? Whatever it was, it is evident that Sardar Daljeet Singh, with the rare combination in him of deep commitment to the Sikh cause, his outstanding intellect and his inherent capacity for hard work, was the man who was destined to play as historical a role in stemming the onslaught of anti-Sikh forces, which are bent upon eroding the identity of Sikh religion, as was played by the pioneers of the Singh Sabha Movement, Gyani Ditt Singh and Bhai Jawahar Singh.

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SARDAR DALJEET SINGH: A BEACON OF INSPIRATION

Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon

A man of light and learning, Sardar Daljeet Singh is no longer in our midst, but he continues to be a beacon of inspiration for Sikh scholars all over the world. He was one of those few who leave indelible 'footprints on the sands of time'. His legacy has a burning relevance to the crisis that Sikhs and Sikhism confront today.

Although Sardar Daljeet Singh retired as a bureaucrat after a distinguished career spanning over thirty years, yet the subject that was dearest to his heart was Sikh studies. It was a mission with him for the fulfilment of which he spent his twilight years in complete devotion. Sikhism, in its finest essence, found a noble response from his inner self and all his energies, till the last day of his life, were devoted to this sublime cause. A dynamic view of human life, as envisaged in Sikhism, made it amply clear to him that life holds endless opportunities for the unfolding and flowering of one's personality. Sardar Daljeet Singh's personality flowered at its best as he entered the field of Sikh studies. He dominated the field like a colossus. He gave his best to this cause. Walt Whitman's lines very aptly come to mind: "Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity, when I give, I give myself."

He gave himself whole-heartedly not only to the study of Sikhism but also to the comparative study of religions. Record of his achievements is astonishing. His well-known books, 'Sikhism: A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism' and 'Essays on the Kartarpuri Bir' are the products of his long hard and unflagging labour. These have become classics of their kind. Another pioneering work, 'Essentials of Sikhism', published a few months before his death breaks new ground in clarifying the doctrinal position of Sikhism vis-a-vis other religions. It reveals Sikhism as a sovereign independent dispensation. He brought to bear on the subject an unbiased mind, a fastidious fondness for accuracy as well as consummate erudition. He believed that the message of the Gurus had an eternal relevance, especially in the turbulent times through which mankind is passing today.

Sardar Daljeet Singh brought clear perspectives on several pertinent themes like the Sikh world-view, God in Sikhism, the *miri-piri* concept and the unity and integrity of the Sikh doctrine from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. He challenged the western scholars who, advertently or inadvertently, tried to misrepresent and denigrate Sikhism through their writings.

He also reflected great concern with the current Punjab crisis. His masterly analysis of the water problem served to enhance understanding of the roots of the crisis. It is a tribute to his sense of veracity that he has not been faulted, challenged or contradicted on this subject till today. He exposed the subtle machinations of the framers of the Punjab Reorganisation Act (1966), which virtually reduced Punjab to a crippled sub-state and drove it from one disaster to another. This Act was patently violative of the Indian Constitution, as under sections 78-80 of this Act, the powers of control, administration, maintenance, distribution and development of the waters and hydel power of Punjab rivers were vested in the Central Government. The Act opened a Pandora's box and proved highly detrimental to the economic and political interests and future of the state and its people. This shook Sardar Daljeet Singh's faith in the bonafides of the Indian Government. Indian polity, he believed had failed the Sikhs. The tragedy and trauma of Punjab made him sad. But with a mind, saturated with the wisdom, inspiration and optimism of the Gurus, he never lost faith in the divine justice which, he believed, was bound to prevail in the end. In fact, it is this faith which sustains all those who bear the trauma and share the agony of Punjab.

There was a touch of the sublime about the selfless and studious way Sardar Daljeet Singh pursued the calling of his choosing and achieved a complete identity with it. He lived a simple and austere life, unmindful of his personal comforts. Deeply imbued with Sikh ethos, he was modest and magnanimous. Warm in his affections and with a broad range of sympathies, he was always willing to share his learning with others. He shunned the limelight and remained indifferent to fame. His work was dearer to him than anything else. He allowed nothing to lure him away from it.

For the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chd., S. Daljeet Singh, was like a brilliant captain who vanished from the scene after playing a glorious innings and charting a dynamic course for his team mates. The Institute respectfully salutes him on his first death anniversary. ~ ~ ~

SARDAR DALJEET SINGH – A VIVEK BUDDHI SIKH WIDWAN

Dr S.S. Sodhi & Dr J. S. Mann

Sardar Daljeet Singh, a *Vivek Buddhi Widwan*, through transcendental operations, cultivated a crystallized intelligence, developed a cosmocentric mind which had no boundaries.

Through meditative dwelling on Sikh issues, he produced a metaphoric universe which is reflected in his world famous book entitled "Sikhism: A comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism", Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979.

Through "de-automatization" of his forthright, candid, unoffensive, breezy, genial, warm and affable style of writing, he provided an engageable discussion about the identity, unity and integrity of the Sikh gospel and mysticism, as it related to principal religions of the world.

In his writing, one can easily discover "his wise passiveness" and "awareness without comparison". He does not de-nature supernatural by using paradigms, categories and labels. His training in mental silence and choiceless attention is reflected when he discusses the *Khands*, the Sikh Gurus, *Gurmukh*, and Saints of the Radical Bhakti School.

In his many writings, he urged us "to light a candle rather than curse darkness."

He urged us to intentionally dissolve our egos through *karuna*, so as to reach oceanic — *Fanah* stage of our becoming and growth. He wanted us to become fearless and develop compulsions to empathize with the powerless. He wanted us to seek at-one-ment with Khalsa by breaking the chains of our bondage and separation anxiety.

Sardar Daljeet Singh brought dedication, and compassion to work co-operatively with others by providing a model and making other Khalsacentric scholars learn from him vicariously.

Sardar Daljeet Singh led an intellectually assertive life believing in universal consciousness and deep mystical saintliness. He internalized attributes of a good Sikh and actualized them through his Khalsacentric living.

Sardar Daljeet Singh believed in the importance of productive work. His hundreds of writings and involvement point to the fact that after retiring "he just put four new tyres and started running even faster for the Sikh causes!" In that sense, Sardar Daljeet Singh accepted social responsibility and became the *Rakha* of the Sikh faith. Through *Naam* he removed his I-am-ness and awakened his love, contentment, truth, humility and other-orientedness.

In his many writings, he defended the claims of consciousness, and challenged oppressors to stop trampling over the rights of a troubled minority. He was the vanguard of righteousness, and divided himself in the images of the Sikh Gurus and many mystics (Baba Wasakha Singh and Sant Randhir Singh) about whom he wrote so affectionately.

Sardar Daljeet Singh found a surprising commonality amongst mystics of different religions. He was not a prisoner of religious paradigms, hence, he did not go looking for a "good fit" after collecting the "historical data". He used universal principles of holism in his research.

As a Sikh scholar, he assumed the right and responsibility to describe his people's reality from their own perspective, exploring their own values and ideals. He put Punjab and Punjabi ideals and values at the centre of the inquiry. He used Panjab Place to gain a better perspective to the research paradigm of the "outsiders". He challenged their research so as to prevent them from doing their "role dances". He provided an accurate explanation of Sikh experience and checked his findings through introspection and retrospection.

Sardar Daljeet Singh had a clear idea how knowledge on Sikhism was being "manufactured" and used by pathological Sikh researchers.

His motivation to do Sikh research was his commitment to generate knowledge that would inspire the troubled Sikh minority. He brought harmony in his research by not creating, exaggerating and sustaining divisions between or within the communities, but strived to

create a harmonious relationship. He brought justice in his research. He was fair to all participants whom he studied, and was mindful of the welfare of all of them. Justice, truth, harmony, creation of non-offensive knowledge through truthful writing, grounding the research in the Place and Time and the experience of the community members, was Sardar Daljeet Singh's fully functioning, persuasive, caring, warm, patient, and credibly confident sensitive style. He had a "felt sense" of what to do or where to throw the next spark of enthusiasm.

Sardar Daljeet Singh was able to see, through his keen observation, that "the emperor was not wearing any clothes!" Also, he was bold to write and tell that it was so! He was nourished by his sensitivity and stayed totally alive in his power of perception.

He created an atmosphere of expectancy from Sikh scholars and showed them how to soar by giving examples and encouragement. Under his able guidance they stretched, changed and became very productive. Sensitivity in Sardar Daljeet Singh embodied all of the intangible dimensions of his personality — the power, the kindness and caring — and especially his ability to read accurately what was happening to his people.

Sardar Daljeet Singh was an excellent observer of behaviour of powerful - powerless people. He saw, heard and sensed things from his personal experience and wrote about them. He found patterns in chaos, structures out of apparently unrelated events. His book, "Sikhism: A comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism", is an excellent example of this phenomenon.

In his death, the Sikh *Jagat* has lost a *Vivek Buddhi Sikh Widwan*. The gap will be hard to fill. He, like a practising mystic, urged us to BECOME by awakening our intelligence.

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THE SAINTLY SARDAR DALJEET SINGH

Karnail Singh

Carlyle observed 'History is the essence of innumerable biographies'. Sikh history is without doubt, the biographies of numberless martyrs and saint-soldiers who appeared on the national scene again and again, whenever the community faced critical situations, whether in the field of politics, religions or plain social or cultural fields.

For instance, with the loss of political power by the Sikhs in 1849, in the words of G.S. Dhillon, 'There were two aspects of British policy towards Sikhs. First, their political suppression, second, their ideological erosion by a studied patronage of *mahants* and *pujaris* through government nominated managers of their shrines'.¹

This dismal situation threw such stalwarts as Bhai Maharaj Singh and Baba Ram Singh Kuka. Although both of them ended up in the brutalities of British jails, yet they ignited such patriotic fires as ultimately led the community to greater heights. The Singh Sabha Movement of the eighties of the last century produced luminaries such as Prof. Gurmukh Singh and Bhai Dit Singh who strengthened the religious base of the Sikhs which is the source of their zeal and vigour. Thereafter, Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Prof. Puran Singh, S. Sunder Singh Majithia, S. Harbans Singh Attari and Bhai Jodh Singh laid solid foundations for higher education and scientific knowledge of the community.

With this strengthening of the religious base and spread of education among the community came the strength and consciousness to take back their holy shrines from government-backed corrupt *mahants*. This movement ushered in yet another set of saint-soldiers such as S. Teja Singh Samundri, S. Teja Singh Bhuchar, Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar, S. Jaswant Singh, Master Tara Singh and many others, who, after six years of blood-curdling non-violent and Christ-like peaceful crusade restored the Sikh gurdwaras to their original custodians — the Sikh Panth.

Immediately after independence in 1947, the enlightened Sardar Kapur Singh of the Indian Civil Service and the fearless Master Tara Singh took up courageous stand against the all-out onslaughts of the new Indian rulers. Their enlightened leadership brought a ray of hope to the beleaguered Sikhs who were being cheated out of their rightful place in the country and even in the sphere of their religion, history and culture.

Dr Sangat Singh, a former member of Policy Planning Think Tank in the Indian Foreign Office and an alternate member of Joint Intelligence Committee and also a former Director, Strategic Studies in India's Defence Ministry, succinctly sums up the situation:

'The onslaught on Sikh theology at the hands of Christian Missionaries, now articulated by their cohorts, Pashaura Singh and Piar Singh, recieved adequate response from Akal Takht. Harjot Oberoi of Vancouver University, British Columbia, is another recruit espousing the re-Hinduising of Sikhism. The basic Christian attempt has been to engulf the considerable Sikh population in North America and United Kingdom. They are considered vulnerable.' He adds,

'This onslaught has awakened the Sikhs to the threat posed. But there is a vast gulf in the resources of the two sides, and the Sikhs are facing the unequal fight. Broadly speaking, Brahminism has been in league with McLeodian offensive — The equation being established during the period of McLeod's stay at Batala in early 1960s, when there was complete bi-polarisation of Hindus and Sikhs because of the struggle for the Punjabi Suba. This has been an ongoing process.'²

It was this 'ongoing process' which the late Sardar Daljeet Singh and his distinguished colleagues, the late Justice Gurdev Singh, Dr Kuldip Singh, S. Jagjit Singh, Dr Kharak Singh, Prof. Gurtej Singh, Dr Jasbir Singh Mann, Maj. Genral Gurbakhsh Singh, Sardarni Baljeet Kaur Gill and Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon were called upon to face, inspite of the 'gulf between the resources of the two sides', and they successfully met this onslaught on the Sikh way of life through vast literature in the form of books, a journal of repute, and by holding international Conferences. They contradicted every falsehood and spurious literature produced by the hostile and anti-Sikh elements in India and abroad. Sardar Daljeet Singh, superbly fitted to the task, with his knowledge of Encyclopaediac dimensions, his dogged and latent

reserves of willpower and energy and a Savant's demeanour, coupled of course with his colleague's hearty co-operation resulted in some of the earlier Panthic antagonists like Pashaura Singh apologising at the Holy Sri Akal Takht for their past anti-Sikh actions. Although the ongoing process is still there, yet with the guidelines laid by Sardar Daljeet Singh, his colleagues will certainly have considerable check, if not complete control over the erosion of Sikh faith and culture.

In this crusade, the name of Sardar Daljeet Singh will live in the history of Sikh religion. It will live in the traditions of universities and the academic world. It will live in the annals of International Conferences during the past decade. It will live in the legends of controversies that surrounded the religious and social parameters of Sikh faith.

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Section II

SIKH IDENTITY

SIKH IDENTITY AND SIKH IDEOLOGY

Dr Surjeet Singh Bhatia

Is Sikhism an original and independent faith? A controversy has been raging on this subject since the end of the last century. Some people try to prove it as a puritan and concentrated form of Hinduism, which had degenerated into polytheism, idol worship, ritualism and ultimate Brahminical exploitation of the masses. Some people call Guru Granth Sahib, another version of the Vedas, and call Guru Granth Sahib the fifth Veda. By so doing, they try to assert that there is nothing new or original in Sikhism, thereby decrying and downgrading it. There are others who would try to put it as a sort of synthesis of the Islamic monotheism with a casteless social order, and Hinduism so as to create a sort of cultural unity between these two major communities who were forced, by the accident of history, to live together in this land. There are still others who consider the creation of Sikhism to forestall the onslaught of Islamic culture, which had at that time set itself to devour and eradicate Hinduism by the sheer force of political power, and as such, it was the need of the hour, but today it has out-lived its utility. Some people pick up snatches from *Gurbani* and try to quote parallel or similar verses from the Vedas, the Gita and other religious books of the Hindus, on the one hand, and the Quran and other books of Semitic religions, on the other. By so doing, they try to prove that Guru Granth Sahib is a compilation of eclectic ideas. In support of their argument, they quote the liberal use of the terminology of these books in the Holy Granth, as also the frequent references to the deities and mythical heroes of these books, particularly the Puranas, without properly analysing the purpose for which they have been referred to in the Granth Sahib.

All this campaign of decrying and downgrading the Sikh scripture and Sikhism has been accentuated after 1947 with the sole purpose of denying the separate entity of the Sikhs and assimilating them into the vast ocean of myriad of Hindu ideologies, mainly to deny the Sikhs a status of national minority. Macauliffe, a British historian

and a famous scholar of the Sikh scripture and Sikh history, has likened this attitude of the Hindus to a boa constrictor, who squeezes its prey into his coils to ultimately devour it. Buddhism was lifted off its feet from the country of its origin in the 8th century and had to seek its home outside India. It may be noted that Dr Kailash Nath Katjn, a home minister in the Union Cabinet in the nineteen fifties, asserted that the Sikhs should give up their separate entity and join the "national mainstream."

Historians have been asserting that the Sikh movement by Guru Nanak was just a continuation of the Bhakti movement of the medieval period of Indian history, thereby superimposing Vaishnavite ideology of God incarnates on Sikhism, and at the same time, singling out Guru Gobind Singh and the creation of the Khalsa from the ideology of Guru Nanak.

Recently, a new trend has set in at the international level. The Christian missionaries have begun to feel that Sikhism might take over as the religion of the world. In the new world of science and deductive logic, the Biblical gospels of resurrection and passage to heaven are likely to lose their appeal. But, Sikhism, based upon reaching the Infinite through the finite, and thereby developing a system of human values, is likely to muster universal belief in the ultimate Truth. As such, the Christian missionaries of the west have started a campaign of cutting at the roots of Sikhism by challenging the authenticity of Guru Granth Sahib.

The materialistic approach to life and existentialism have started a sort of tirade against the Sikh symbols and Sikh way of life in the very homeland of the Sikhs, thereby dissolving and mutilating Sikh identity.

Lakhs of Sikhs have settled in the western countries. Influenced by the western culture, the western way of life, and in adjustment to their respective government's restrictions for absorbing them in employment or their race, for getting absorbed in the local milieu, they have discarded their basic symbols of identity, particularly the wearing of unshorn hair, beards, turbans and *kirpans*. Though they have a deep feeling for the tenets of Sikh faith and their assertion for being Sikhs, they no more have their faithful attachment to these outward symbols of Sikh identity. Because of their numbers and their

monetary status, they are asserting to be recognised as, as good members of the Sikh community as those adhering to these symbols ordained at the time of the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. Since, they are no longer conversant with the script and language of the Sikh scripture, the terms *amrit vela*, daily recital of *Gurbani* in the morning, *sangat*, *kirtan* and *ardas* have lost their conceptual meaning. They have been reduced to mere rituals. All this would mean degeneration of Sikhism to merely scholastic pursuits rather than a way of life. These western Sikhs have to look to preachers and missionaries from Punjab, very few of whom have real missionary zeal, and practically none can represent a living model of a Sikh as depicted in *Gurbani*.

The significance of maintaining the separate entity of a religion has been asserted by Sri Aurobindo, one of the most praised, well-meaning and respected saintly personalities of the present century in his book "The Foundations of Indian Culture" when he writes:

"The culture which gives up its living separateness, which neglects its active self-defense will be swallowed up and (the nation) which lives by it will lose its soul, and perish."

Separate entity of the Sikh religion began to be asserted and established during the life time of Guru Nanak himself as stated by Bhai Gurdas (1550-1647), a contemporary of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Gurus, and the greatest exponent of Sikh thought. He says in his *vaar* I, *pauri* 31:

"Shabad jitti sidh mandli kito su apna panth nirala."

Guru Arjun Dev says, "I have broken free from both Hindus and Muslims."

Hindu turak dohan ne bera

SGGS, p. 1136

Guru Gobind Singh advised the Sikhs to maintain their separate identity and gave a stern warning not to take to Brahminical ways of ritualism in unequivocal terms:

*Jab lag rahe Khalsa niara, tab lag taj deo maen sara
Jab eh jahe bipran ki reet, maen na karun in ki partit.*

i.e., Sikhs would lose the Guru's confidence if they take to the ritualistic ways. What is unique (*niralapan*) about Sikhism that should form the basis of its separate entity and separate identity.

According to Duncan Greenles, a theosophist from the United States, there is no doubt that all religions advocate the pursuit of the Ultimate Truth, but it falls to the credit of Sikhism alone that it is so perfect and so thorough that it takes the truth to logical ends and allows no faltering, and no let up, nor any arbitrariness or deviation from the postulates of the Truth. H.L. Bradshaw, a British writer, says that whereas all other religions contain the truth, Sikhism contains the fullness of truth. This perfection and fullness has to be guarded and maintained at all costs and at all levels.

Guru Nanak arrives at this perfection by expounding a complete, harmoniously integrated and working unity between God, man and the universe. Through his concept of *Naam*, he defines the Ultimate Truth in terms of this living unity. This harmoniously integrated and working unity of *Naam* has been brought about by the active participation of God Himself through what is called by Guru Nanak, His *Hukam* or Will which remains unabated, undeterred and unchallenged. He has created His own Self and then the entire universe, providing a definite working character to each of the phenomena, and is very carefully supervising the harmonious working of these phenomena in its minutest details to create this well integrated and living unity, with Himself alone at the helm of this enormous and gigantic, well integrated unity. It is this working unity which creates a link between the visible reality and the Ultimate Truth. We formulate our ideas about the Ultimate Truth, from the harmoniously working unity of nature, both past and present, and jump from the visible truth to the Ultimate Truth, and form such ideas about Him as the all-pervading, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, fathomless, formless and the source spring of all virtues. The sum total of these virtues put together can be expressed only in words or *shabad*. It is for this reason that the Ultimate Truth is also called *shabad* and becomes synonymous with *Naam*, *Hukam* and Harmony, i.e., *Sehaj* in Sikh literature. The importance of the relationship between the truth and *Hukam* can be gauged from what Guru Nanak has said in *Japu ji*:

Kiv sachiya hoiya kiv koorhia tutia pali

Hukami rajhai chalna Nanak likhiya nali

SGGS, p. 1

The only approach to the Ultimate Truth is to follow *hukam* in word and deed. Truth, according to Guru Nanak is the One which is beyond the impact of time and, therefore, it is outside the circle of

birth, aging and death. Therefore, it cannot have a body form. He is, therefore, reckoned as a spirit — a living spirit in the context of *Naam* and hence referred to as *Jagat Jot*.

Being the sole authority in running the affairs of the universe, God, according to Guru Nanak, is not confined to a solitary place of rest in His Heaven, rather He is actively involved in His work, without any deputies or helpers. He does not break His authority and does not require such forces as Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, or Durga, thereby eliminating polytheism of the Hindus altogether from his thought. Again, he does not contribute to the Hindu idea of considering any one of the phenomena of nature, such as the sun, the air, water, a mountain, or rain etc., to represent the Ultimate Truth — God or an approach to the truth. Such a thought will create a break in the unity of nature, wherein each phenomena has to work in a sort of cause, and effect relationship with others. The Ultimate Truth lies in their integrated working unity with one another as well as with God. It is for this reason, that he would not give any credence to worshipping such natural phenomena as fire, water, sun, rain, a river or some animals, however beneficial they may be for man (e.g., the cow) or dangerous for man, such as cobra. Working unity of the entire nature with their unity with God, on the one hand, and man, on the other, is Guru Nanak's way. Guru Nanak does not contribute to the idea of Sankhya Shastra, wherein nature is considered as an independent entity having no attachment with God. Sidh Yogis preaching celibacy and renunciation of the living world, and recognising God as *Sunnya* (*Sunan*) i.e., not a living spirit, were badly detested by Guru Nanak. He completely discards the way of the Jain monks who do not drink clean water, live on left-overs, stir up faeces to save lives of germs and insects in it, wear cloth covers over their noses, get their hair pulled out and avoid bath. All this does not fit into his concept of harmony and free flow of His Will in maintaining the integrated unity of nature. The idea of Shankracharia to consider the world and nature as unreal and *maya* does not find favour with Guru Nanak. Sikhism considers *maya* or changing nature of phenomena and their value to man, as an integral part of His Will and, therefore, harmonious living.

Maya mamta karte kai, Yehu hukamu kahi sharishti upai.

Sikhism does not discard *maya* altogether but rather utilizes it for wholesome living by man. Guru Nanak does not reject *maya*, but he rejects attachment with it. In this manner, Shankracharia's approach towards nature is rejected and discarded.

Since, Sikhism rejects the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh as deputies to the Almighty for running the affairs of the universe, there is no scope for *avtars* or incarnations, as they are incarnations of Vishnu.

Moreover, the *avtars* — Sri Ram and Sri Krishan, were human beings and had all the limitations of human beings. How could they represent the timeless, deathless, formless, fathomless, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and universal truth. Sikhism has excluded them from its purview, as also the scriptures like Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Gita, based upon their life styles in a given situation. Since, these books were composed not by Sri Ram or Sri Krishan themselves, but were prepared much after them, they do not depict their personal experience with the Truth. They encourage hero worship, rather than attachment with the formless Truth. Sikhism excludes them from its purview as also all types of idolatory or images which are representatives of physical form.

No individual person, howsoever great, well equipped or *maryada purshotam* he may be, can be the ideal of perfection in Sikhism. It is for this reason that the collective personality of the *sangat* — men, women and children of all ages and all walks of life, join together and worship *Naam*, which is considered in Sikhism, to represent God — The Truth.

Vichi sangati hari prabhu vase jeeyo

Vichi sangati hari prabhu vartada bujhu shabad vichari.

It is this collective personality which is termed as Khalsa, whom Guru Gobind Singh calls worthy of worship (*Khalsa poojane yog*) and (*Khalsa mere isat suhirad*).

Guru Nanak rejected the Hindu idea of religious sanction attached with social order of the division of man into birth-based high and low castes, as a reward or punishment for a person's good or bad deeds in a previous birth. He rejected such man-made and arbitrary prejudices regarding different professions which had resulted in the supremacy of the Brahminical and the ruling classes over all other types

of workers, particularly at the lowest rung of the professions who were considered menial and, therefore, untouchables. They were denied even the right to worship. Guru Nanak took the idea of the all-pervasiveness of truth to its logical ends, and saw a reflection of the spirit of the Ultimate Truth i.e., God in every individual. Similarly, he saw in every profession His order of things for creating a harmony in the integrated working unity of the totality of the universe. He, thus, believed in the equality of all men, each of whom were born free from all encumbrances of the previous birth and similarly, in an equally honourable place to all the professions, and all workers. Himself coming from a high caste Khatri, he sided with the workers considered low in the Hindu social order. In order to bring in this equality and root out all such human disparities and discriminations in a practical and effective way, he introduced such institutions as *sangat*, *pangat* and *sarovars*. These also introduced an urban way of life wherein all professions become equal automatically. Regional and caste disparities, a bane of the Hindu religio-social order, was removed by Guru Gobind Singh by the ceremony of *amrit*, where men from different high and low castes, having different professions, and coming from different areas were united together.

Similarly, the discrimination against women, who were relegated to a lower status than man and were debarred from religious education and religious ceremonies, were forced by religion to burn themselves alive on the pyre of their dead husbands or live a life of destitute women, was removed and they were given an honourable status, equal to that of men. They were as good members of the *sangat* as men, and the custom of *sati* was banned altogether. This was all a revolution to bring about unity between man and God, accept the truth of the harmony of nature and remove all man-made arbitrariness.

Another very important aspect of the Sikh religion is that it does not break the unity of man's life into such arbitrary stages as *Brahamcharya*, *Grahashth*, *Ban prastha* and *Sanyas ashrams*. Sikhism is a whole-life religion, wherein the entire life is considered as an integrated unity, right from birth till death. Sikhism considers family life as the norm, very much in line with the harmony of the Will, so that human life should not come to an end, as was envisaged by the practice of celibacy by the Sidh Yogis. One approach to religion has been

Hasandiyan khelandiyan panandiyan khavandiyan viche hovai mukati.

SGGS, p. 522

Sikhism does not consider life in seclusion as the norm. Being a whole life religion, it takes all aspects of human life such as social, cultural, economic, political as well as religious within its fold as a harmoniously integrated unity and there is no question of breaking this multi-fold unity. Sikh Gurus rejected the Hindu aim of religion alongwith its approach to religion. Hindus approach various gods and goddesses for either the worldly benefits in the form of riches and comforts or a seat in the heavens also known as *mukti*. Both these purposes are selfish in nature. Religion cannot be a means of self aggrandisement.

For this purpose, a number of imaginary gods and goddesses are created. Multiplicity of human needs and requirements results in a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, whose number swells into crores, each one with a separate method of propitiating in the form of *artis*, recitation of *mantras*, fasts, offerings and rituals, which in their turn require the help of the priestly class, the Brahmins. Then, for *mukti* and a seat in the heavens, such practices as recitation of the Sanskrit scriptures, donations, *havanas*, *yagyas*, visits to places of pilgrimage, baths at different *ghats* or tanks like Hardwar, Triveni, Pushar and Nasik, etc., torturing the body in penances and offering sacrifices to the extent of sacrificing ones ownself have been indulged into. This tantamounts to purchasing *mukti* or a seat in the heavens. All this again requires the services of the Brahmins, who in their turn fleece and exploit the innocent worshippers. Guru Nanak had decried these priests as hypocritic agents. Sikhism does not give any credence to places of pilgrimage since no particular place or direction can be marked as the house of God, who is all pervasive and omnipresent. All ritualisms are done away with as arbitrary and hypocritical in nature. Sikhism rejects the idea of heaven or *mukti* altogether.

Koi baikunth nahi lavai lage mukti bapuri bhi giani tiyage.

SGGS, p.1078

Sikhism rejects worldly comforts and riches, on the one hand, and *mukti* on the other, as the aim of human life in favour of the love for Truth.

Raju na chahon mukti na chahon mani preet charan damlare.

SGGS, p. 534

Love does not thrive on greedy considerations of the self. Rather, it requires selfless abdication to His Will, to be in harmony with the smooth flow of the Will controlling the totality of the entire universe. Since, this love can be bestowed only through His Grace, one is required to pray for His Grace and, at the same time, remember His qualities and acquire them in one's life style, so that a person is in complete concordance with Him during one's life. This concordant merger with Him, with His Will is called *jeewan mukti*, and this is the aim of life in Sikhism.

As regards Semitic religions, Sikhism does accept the oneness of the all-pervading, formless and fathomless, omnipotent God. But, since Sikhism does not accept the fable of the throwing out of Adam and Eve of heaven as a punishment for Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, all the religious formulations accruing out of this fable are rejected. God in Sikhism is neither an annoyed one, nor confined to a solitary corner in the heaven. He is actively involved in running the affairs of His creation and is as loving and patronising as a father, as helpful and co-operative as a brother and as sincere as a real friend (*yaar*). He is always kind and bestows His Grace upon any one and every one, giving a person all protection in the hour of adversity. With His Grace, He offers guidance to man like a guide or Guru. If man is suffering in this world, it is not, because of His curse, but because of man's ego, which keeps a man away from Him. Ego stands in the way of recognising His kindness and patronage and takes a person away from the harmony of His Will. A perfect guide — who is in consonance with God, or God Himself cures man from ego and brings him back to be in unison with the harmony of His Will. Sikhism does not accept the idea of a messenger or prophet or son of God, faith in whom will be a guarantee for resurrection, and pardon from God on the doomsday on the recommendation of the prophet or son of God. His justice is absolutely true, quick and not influenced by any body's recommendation. Sikhism does not accept the idea of hell or heaven and, therefore, does not consider the proposal of accepting any prophet or son of God, who would get a person admitted to heaven or save him from the fire of hell. What is to happen after death is left to God Himself — the

Creator.

Nanak jini kartai kamu keeya so janai kartaru. SGGS, p. 466

Sikhism does not accept the breaking up of the unity of man into men of faith and pagans.

They are all equal, to be judged, not on the basis of any faith, but by their own good deeds. The division of man into men of faith and pagans, and particularly the pagans being looked down upon with scorn and coerced to conversion to a particular faith is against the spirit of equality.

According to Sikhism, man comes to the earth without any burden of the curse to suffer because of the disobedience committed by the so called first man, Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit. He rather comes to the earth as a free man with a free conscience, in accordance with His Grace. Human birth is an opportunity provided to man to meet God.

Gobind milan kee ih teri Bareeya.

SGGS, p. 12

Rather than any punishment, He is, in fact, considered in Sikhism, as born to rule over all other forms of creation like a *sardar*.

Avar joni teri paniharee. Isu dharti mahi teri sikhari

SGGS, p. 374

Sikhism, therefore, offers a positive and constructive approach to life. Women are not considered in any way inferior to man or given a lower status than man in the religio-social life. They are considered equal to man for all intents and purposes, as good a part of the creation as men. Since, man according to Semitic religions, has to wait for resurrection till doomsday, he has to be in his grave till then. What a long wait for this promise and to what benefit to the dead person. This promise has encouraged the worship for the dead and maintenance of graves around both the Church and the Mosque. Is not faith in life more positive than faith in the dead, as people are led to worship of graves, particularly for the fulfilment of their desires?

Accepting a messenger, prophet or the son of God to act as a go-between the annoyed God and man, has in its turn turned man to worship the messenger, prophet or the son of God, rather than God. It is to be noted that even the Muslim Sufis have turned to concentrate

on the Love of God and left the Prophet, without however, asserting this departure emphatically. It is to be noted that Sikhs suffered a lot of torture and offered sacrifices in thousands for not accepting Mohammad as Rosul-e Allah. No doubt, they had faith in Allah and believed in a direct link with Him.

Sikhs do not accept the idea of offering prayers with face towards Mecca or going to *Hajj*, as it was not in the fitness of the all-pervading quality of God. Similarly, they give no credence to such rituals as fasts, offering sacrifices on Id-ul- Zuha or circumcision of men. Sikhs advocate maintaining the original form, *sabat surat* of the body (SGGS p. 1084), as created by the Creator in obedience to His Will. It is for this reason that they keep their hair unshorn and undyed all through their lives.

By giving all these details in the form of comparison, what I want to emphasize is that Sikhism is neither an extension of Hinduism, nor a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, nor created for protecting the Hindus against the onslaught of Islam. It is an independent and unique religion based upon revelation of the Truth.

Sikhism constitutes a revealed religion based upon messages received by Guru Nanak and the other Gurus, directly from Truth Himself, when through the Grace of God, each one of them came, in a state of complete consonance, complete unison and merger with Him. This is a state, described by Guru Gobind Singh as "*Dwai te ek rup hwai gayo*." In such a state, when their identity and entity was completely lost in Him, whatever came out of the mouth of the Guru, was His word. It was as if the Ultimate Truth spoke through the mouth of the Guru. Guru Nanak himself testifies in these words:

"O Lalo, as I do receive the word of the Lord, so I do pass on to you."
SGGS, p.722

Guru Amar Das says:

"It is He — the Lord alone, and there is none else. I speak as and when He makes me speak."
SGGS, p. 39

Similarly, Guru Arjun, the fifth guru, says:

"I know not what to say, I say only what is commanded by my Lord."
SGGS, p. 763

It is believed that revelation descended upon the prophets of Semitic religions. But, they did not record them personally. The scriptures were prepared by their followers at a much later stage, and were based upon either the discourses of these prophets on their life styles or their behaviour in particular situations, thereby leaving much scope for surmises, exaggerations, hearsay and interpolations. But, in the case of the Sikh scripture, the message received by the Gurus was recorded by the Gurus themselves. Then, in order to ward off any hearsay stories and exaggerations about the life styles of the Gurus, Guru Nanak himself advises not to imitate the Guru, but his word alone is to be reckoned. (SGGS, p. 933)

The Sikh scripture is in a poetic form, to be sung under definite musical tones, so that no scope is left for any adulteration or interpolation. Then, the entire compositions were collected, verified and compiled in the form of Guru Granth Sahib, so that any unauthorized interpolation called *kachi bani* should not meddle with the Sikh approach to religion.

This word of the Guru, which, as stated above, not only describes the Truth, but also represents or constitutes Truth itself. Known as *shabad*, it describes the *shabad*, i.e., Truth makes a person understand, appreciate and recognize the Truth, and ultimately transcends him to merge with the Truth if proper atmosphere is created.

It should be noted that the role of the Gurus in Sikhism is not to be compared with the role of the Semitic prophets, who help a person cross into heaven on the doomsday, much after his death. The Guru in Sikhism — in the form of word (*shabad*) helps him realize the Truth and merge with the Truth in a person's life time. This Guru, in the form of word, is Guru Granth Sahib and constitutes the first major form of the identity of Sikhism. It is not to be considered as a book of knowledge or philosophy, etc. It is a means, a guide to connect man with the Truth, to merge him with the Truth. For merger with the Truth, man is required to give up his ego and abdicate his self to the harmony of the Will or *Hukam*. Of course, it is a difficult task. But, by concentrating upon *shabad*, the entire attitude of the mind is diverted from the self to the *shabad*. For this purpose, an early morning concentration upon *shabad*, what is known as *simran* in Sikhism, is the way. It is to be noted that such interjectory words as *Waheguru*, or any verse, stanza

or a full *shabad* in the Granth Sahib carries a description of the Truth in the form of His praises, His qualities. Concentration upon these praises has a two fold role. It impresses upon a person his smallness in comparison with His vast greatness, and this, in its turn, helps to subdue the ego and the self in him. The other part is, that by time and again spelling His praises, one acquires these qualities and practises them in his behaviour, life style, to ultimately acquire a wave length with the ultimate harmony with *Naam*, i.e., the Ultimate Truth. He, thus, builds his character on the lines of *Hukam* and Truth. He, thus, comes in consonance with Him, and is on the way to become a part and parcel of Truth — a *sachiaara*.

A daily recitation of *Gurbani*, particularly the five *banis*, freshen up his faith, whose reassertion every day, before his daily work starts, confirms his faith in the Ultimate Truth or *Naam*.

His ultimate attachment with Truth comes only with the bestowal of His Grace. For seeking His Grace, a daily *ardas* is very necessary. Though every *shabad* in the Sikh scripture carries a verse or two for *ardas*, yet the personal *ardas* brings a person face to face with God, and he talks to God from the core of his heart, pours out his heart to Him and feels as if he has had a meeting with Him. *Ardas* cultivates humility in a person, washes out the ego in him, and also forms a daily vow to abdicate his self to Him. This, selfless abdication is the basis of Love for Him. This love is the ultimate aim of Sikhism. (SGGS, p. 534)

The daily attendance of *sangat* — the Sikh congregation in the presence and patronage of Guru Granth Sahib, provides a person with an opportunity to be one with many people who are on the same path. The melody of the *kirtan* through which His praises are sung transcends his mind to the realms of the formless, and fathomless, whose all pervasiveness can be felt in this congregation. Thus, a person gets a first hand experience of merger with the Truth.

Sewa implying comfort to the collected humanity, without any discrimination is complementary to this union of a person with humanity, who represents the all-pervading God, living on the earth, around you.

The outer symbols of Sikh identity — the five K's combine to build around you an aura of *Naam*, unshorn hair and beard constitute

a symbol of obedience to His Will. Dyeing and cutting the hair and shaving off the beard reflects a daily exercise of disobedience to His Will. This is, therefore, the basic and integral part of the Sikh belief. The comb cleans the hair and the turban covers the hair. Again turban is a symbol of respect for the Master and also represents your being always in His presence, always in the protection of His shadow. *Kara* — the iron bangle, is a reflection of unflinching faith in His suzerainty, patronage and protection. *Kachh* — the breeches is the symbol of firmness of personal character, observance of restraint on all types of biological urges and indulgence. Strength of character is the best guarantee against being swayed by worldly pleasures. *Kirpan* is a symbol of an independent conscience, free from all types of fear and rancour. No one can remain truly attached with the Truth, if there is any type of fear from some worldly power. Again use of force for self-protection is permissible only with an eye on mercy and kindly behaviour with even your enemy. *Kirpan* combines in it *kirpa*, i.e., kindness and *aan*, i.e., self respect. As such, it is a symbol of authority as well as justice — two big virtues of God Himself.

Every Sikh is required to partake in the ceremony of *amrit* which implies a pledge to be under the direct control, authority and governance of the Supreme Authority, controlling the entire universe — the Ultimate Truth, and become a Khalsa.

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FORMATION OF EARLY SIKH IDENTITY

Dr B.S. Dhillon

Truly, Sikhism has originated out of the religious experience of Guru Nanak. Analysis of Guru Nanak's *bani* makes it abundantly clear that he intensely felt himself to be an intermediary of God to proclaim the Divine Will. It is a fact, none of the existing religious traditions of India, deserved his unqualified approval. On the other hand, his criticism or even denunciation of the beliefs and practices of almost all the religions, leaves no doubt that he was not to follow their suit. Like a genuine prophet, he unequivocally challenged the evil order, whether it was social, religious or political.¹ To bring about radical change in the existing social order, he denounced the caste system and values attached to it. To establish a fresh world order based on just and equitable terms, he propounded the ideals of equality and brotherhood, which in return were to transform the whole gamut of human relationships. Guru Nanak's religious experience worked as a major catalyst to inspire his successors to strive for his mission. Through the ideals and institutions propounded by him, they continued to apply pragmatic test to his religious experience, which fructified in the emergence of a new socio-religious order in the shape of the Sikh Panth in Northern India.

Some scholars are ill at ease to accept that Guru Nanak's world-view was quite distinct from other religious traditions of India. Secondly, they are of the view that the early period of the Sikh tradition did not show much concern for establishing the religious boundaries of Sikhism. Resultantly, early Sikh identity has been assumed as fluid, amorphous and unfixed in nature.² Parameters of the above problem can be explained, if we have a clear comprehension of how religious experience unfolds itself in definite attitudes and different forms of expression. According to Joachim Wach, all religions, despite their wide variations, are characterised by three universal expressions, i.e., the theoretical, a system of belief; the practical, a system of worship; and the sociological, a system of social relations. In his considered view, until all of these are found, one may have religious tendencies, religious

elements, but not a full religion.³ On the basis of the above taxonomy, we shall have a look at early Sikhism, whether these three expressions of religious experience were clearly discernible. After identifying these expressions, we can draw the religious boundaries of early Sikhism, within which it operated at its earlier stage of history.

The system of belief is considered to be the heart or kernel of any religion. Without going into details, it is sufficient to recall that theoretically Sikhism is purely a monotheistic religion. There is no compromise on Unity of God-head. Man's first and foremost allegiance is to God. God is Transcendent as well as Immanent throughout the world. He responds to prayers and true supplications. God had revealed Himself through the *bani*, i.e., *shabad*, of the Sikh Gurus. He is the Creator, and the world is totally dependant on Him for its existence. Everything, except God, is transitory in this world. Though, the world is not as real as the Creator, yet it is not an illusion, i.e., *maya* or a thing to be despised. To achieve *summum bonum*, one is not required to practise asceticism and to renounce the family, society and the world. Man could achieve liberation by contemplation of the Name of God, in an easy way i.e., *Sahaj*.

Guru Nanak and his successors did not believe in the four-fold division of society as divinely ordained. They had firm faith in the equality and brotherhood of man. Theoretically, Sikhism's world-view is incomplete without the Guru. Guru Nanak was a divine preceptor. He and his successors were believed to be intermediaries between God and the Sikhs. The Divine Will has come to be manifested through their *bani*, i.e., *shabad* or word of God. Succession to guruship was spiritual, and for it, complete identification with the preceptor was essential. The successors of Guru Nanak were not merely his spiritual heirs, but they were also an embodiment of the spirit of 'Nanak'. Hence, unity of guruship was one of the cardinal principles of faith, a fact which Sikh as well as non-Sikh writers have mentioned time and again. Although, the Sikh Gurus were physically different, yet they were believed to be 'One in Spirit' (*Jyot*), and possessed the same light. Even the successor Sikh Gurus, while translating their religious experience into words, did not make use of their personal names, but called themselves 'Nanak' only. The author of *Dabistan* bears a clear testimony to the Sikh belief that it was the spirit of Guru Nanak that dwelt in his successors.⁴ Hence, none other than the legitimately appointed Guru, deserved allegiance

of the Sikh community. Obviously, Unity of God, brotherhood of man, unity of guruship, etc., formed the pillars of the theoretical expression of the Sikh religious experience.

Usually, no religion can function without at least a modicum of practical expression, i.e., cultic or worship. In fact, what is formulated in theoretical statement, is expressed through religious practices, viz., liturgy, sacraments and devotional methods. It has been observed that practical expression always plays an important role to evolve and preserve distinct identity of a community. In the religious phenomena, Sikhism is a revealed religion in which doctrinal elements determine the act of reverence towards the 'Numen'. Scriptural as well as historical sources suggest that right from the beginning *Nam, Dan* and *Isnan*, i.e., internal as well as external purity have been the hall-mark of Sikh worship. For it, both individual and congregational modes, have been prevalent among the Sikhs.

The place where the early Sikhs used to meet for devotional and religious purposes, was known as *dharamsala*, a prototype of the modern gurdwara. In early Sikh literature, we come across frequent references to the *dharamsala*, which suggest that it stood at the centre of the religious life of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak and his successors continued to establish these centres at different places in Punjab.⁵ Later on, the Sikhs organized themselves to set up these centres in various parts of the country.⁶ Almost each *dharamsala*, had a *langar* (community kitchen) attached to it, which provided free food and shelter to the way-farers and pilgrims. Both these institutions were run by the collective efforts of the Sikhs, consequently, maintenance and administration of these institutions also formed part of their religious obligations. Since, the Sikh Gurus enjoined upon the Sikhs to share their earnings with others, *dan* (charity) in the shape of cash and kind, maintenance of these institutions also became an important part of practical expression. Later on, Guru Arjun institutionalized it and appointed his *masands* to collect it from the Sikhs.⁷

Sewa (service), one of the cardinal virtues of Sikh faith, had also acquired the status of worship. Bhai Gurdas enumerates various forms of *Sewa*,⁸ cleaning the floor of *dharamsala*, fetching water, grinding grains, waving fan to comfort the congregation, dusting shoes, etc., which were necessary to meet the basic needs of the *sangat*.

Basically, *dharamsala* was a place of worship, where *kirtan*, recitation of *Gurbani* and devotional exercises of the Sikh community took place.⁹ As *Gurbani* was the major and most sought after mode of worship, it occupied a position of reverence in the religious life of the Sikh community. Early Sikh literature makes reference to *Japu*, *Aarti*, *Sodar* and *Kirtan Sohila*, which had come into use for liturgical purpose among the Sikhs.¹⁰ The *Rahit* which Guru Amar Das is said to have promulgated for observance by the Sikhs, also refers to narration of anecdotes relating to the Sikh Gurus in the congregation.

To express their religious experience, Guru Nanak and his successors had adopted the vernacular language, which according to the author of *Dabistan*, was spoken in the countryside of Punjab.¹¹ To scribe it, *Gurmukhi* script had been evolved. Worship and all the religious services were conducted in Punjabi. Consequently, Punjabi written in *Gurmukhi* script came to be identified with the Sikh community. As the religious practices revolved around *Gurbani*, *pothis* of sacred hymns were made available, which were duly installed in the *dharamsalas*.¹² With the codification of Sikh scripture, Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib replaced the *pothis* to occupy a place of reverence in the *dharamsala*.

During the pontificate of Guru Amar Das, the Sikhs had started celebrating their own festivals.¹³ Bhai Gurdas affirms that celebration of *Vaisakhi* and *Gurpurbs* relating to the lives of Sikh Gurus, had come into vogue.¹⁴ The author of *Dabistan* testifies that on the eve of *Vaisakhi*, the *masands* along with their *sangats* used to visit the Guru's court.¹⁵ The Sikh code of daily worship outlined by Guru Ram Das had found further exposition at the hands of Bhai Gurdas. According to it, an ideal Sikh rose early in the morning, took his daily bath, recited every morning and evening the prescribed texts of *Gurbani*, visited *dharamsala* or gurdwara without fail, listened to the *kirtan*, benefited from the company of the Sikhs gathered there, kept his mind attuned to the *shabad*, scribed *Gurbani* in his spare time, gave unqualified allegiance to the Guru, and obeyed his command like a slave.¹⁶

Foregoing description suggests that early Sikhs were not dependant on Hindu scriptures and law books for their worship. Bhai Gurdas reiterates that except the Supreme Being, the early Sikhs did not worship any gods, goddesses, deities, divine personalities, or animate or inanimate objects.¹⁷ The author of *Dabistan* confirms that

Sikhs firmly believed in the Unity of God, and did not venerate the Hindu *avatars*, the temples and their idols. He had also observed that among the Sikhs there was nothing like the austerities and worship enjoined by the laws of Hindus, and that they did not recite their *mantras* (Vedic and Puranic hymns).¹⁸ Significantly, the Sikh practices were simple in nature, and were completely free from futile rituals, austerities, sacrifices and superstitions. The Sikh mode of worship worked as a bulwark to curb the emergence of otherworldly attitude among the Sikhs. Thus, the Sikh practices struck at the very root of the priestly class of Brahmins, making the early Sikh society free from their strangle-hold.

Sociological expression of doctrinal elements is also very vital for a religion. By its very nature, sociological expression not only creates but also sustains a social relationship. Without it, identity of a religion is hard to established. Looking at the sociological expression of early Sikhism, the institution of *sangat* stood at the centre of community life. Origin of the institution in Sikhism can be traced back to the time of Guru Nanak. During Guru Nanak's itineraries quite a few persons had got interested in his message, he enrolled them as his followers and organized congregations (*sangats*).¹⁹ A group of more than two Sikhs came to be known as *sangat*.²⁰ Although, initially the *sangat* had come into being at the instance of the Sikh Gurus, later Sikhs started to organize themselves into *sangats*. The *sangat* was a group of like-minded persons who were supposed to live a common life under certain norms. To become a member of the *sangat* there was no restriction of caste, creed and sex, but one was required to follow the principles of equality, brotherhood, and complete devotion and allegiance to the Guru. Interestingly, the early Sikhs had come from diverse socio-religious and professional groups.²¹ The *manji* and *masand* system introduced by the third and the fourth master, respectively, had established a direct link between the Sikh Gurus and their followers. Usually, the *sangats* used to visit the Guru's court annually on the eve of *Vaisakhi*, and offered voluntary tributes.²² Besides, whenever the occasion demanded they contributed to fulfil the specific demands of the Sikh Gurus.

The *sangat* was not merely a group of ordinary folk, but it was an embodiment of the Guru and God as well.²³ In the absence of a personal Guru, the *sangat* was the chief socio-religious body to decide the matters concerning the community. The author of *Dabistan* affirms

that whenever a Sikh had a particular wish, the *sangat* was requested to join the prayer that his wish may be fulfilled.²⁴ With the development of Sikhism, the role and functions of the *sangat* increased. Gradually, the *sangat* had acquired such a socio-religious clout that the Sikh Gurus used to solicit their views on important matters. The origin, organization, administration and functions of the *sangat*, reflect the corporate spirit and democratic traditions prevailing among the early Sikhs. In fact, the roots of the doctrine of the Guru Panth can be traced back to the pre-eminence of *sangat* in early Sikh tradition.

Scholars of religion are well aware that voluntary conversion always follows a change in social behaviour, subsequently replacing the social customs of the converts. In the case of early Sikhs, their socio-religious customs were in the evolutionary process. During the pontificate of Guru Amar Das, the Sikhs had got their own birth, death, and marriage ceremonies.²⁵ Moreover, he preserved the unity and integrity of Sikhism, and did not allow it to relapse into Hinduism. The 'Code of Conduct' which Guru Amar Das is said to have promulgated, is very significant in understanding the social and moral boundaries within which the early Sikhs operated at that time.²⁶ It follows as:

1. Have faith in the teachings of one who is a Sikh of the Guru!
2. Do not covet another man's wife!
3. Forbear from meeting those who would make you forget the Guru!
4. Sleep when you feel sleepy, and do not sleep without feeling the need for sleep!
5. Do not torture the body!
6. Sing sacred hymns, or narrate anecdotes relating to the Guru!
7. Speak only when spoken to!
8. Sing the Word (*Shabad*)!
9. Do not speak falsehood!

Similarly, Guru Arjun Dev is also credited with evolving the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' for the Sikhs, considered to be the Covenant (ten commandments) of Sikhism.²⁷ The five Don'ts are:

1. Do not steal!
2. Do not commit adultery!
3. Do not speak ill of others!
4. Do not gamble!
5. Do not take liquor or eat flesh!

One who performs the following five acts (Dos), attains liberation in this life:

1. Regularly joins the congregation (*sangat*)!
2. Respects the humble, the needy and those in distress, and desires others' welfare!
3. Arranges without extraneous consideration, the betrothal of one to whom no one is prepared to give a spouse!
4. Instructs others with the aim of converting a *manmukh* into a Sikh!
5. Prays for the good of everyone and wishes to see no one in pains!

Obviously, the above manuals aimed at regulating the community life of the Sikhs and ensuring discipline. Indeed, to organize and build a healthy society, all the above norms were essential. Besides these manuals, there is sufficient material in the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas which throws a flood of light on the sociological expression of the early Sikhs. According to him, for their social relations, the Sikhs were not governed by the *Varna Ashrama Dharma*. Neither did they believe in superstitions nor did they follow the caste restrictions. They lived a householder's life with only one wife. They treated all Sikhs as their brethren. They had highest regard for their parents. They held women-folk in highest esteem. They shunned the company of *manmukhs* and *minas*. They mixed freely with each other in the congregation, and sat together to eat in the community kitchen. They had their own initiation ceremony and their own mode of greetings. In society they behaved humbly, and were sweet to everybody. They lived a disciplined life, and did not eat or sleep too much. Economically, they employed themselves in useful vocations, and worked hard to earn their livelihood. They did not steal others' property, or usurp the rights of others. They did not misappropriate the offerings and tributes. They were always benevolent to contribute towards the well-being of others.²⁸

The self image that the Sikh community had developed at its earlier stage of history, suggests that, beside abrogating their social ties with the Hindu society, they had developed their own social customs and values. Even the Sikhs like Sadha who were steadily following the Sikh way of life, had no inhibition to renounce the age-old customs.²⁹ Resultantly, the Sikhs had not only drifted away from Hindu society, but had also come to form a new brotherhood.

To recapitulate, towards the beginning of 17th century, the Sikh religious experience had found a concrete theoretical, practical and sociological expression. We can very safely state that early Sikhs had come to acquire their own system of belief, their own mode and moral ideals and customs to govern their day-to-day life. Consequently, the doctrinal, cultic and social boundaries of early Sikh tradition were not blurred, but clearly demarcated. Undoubtedly, the religious experience of Guru Nanak had developed into a full-fledged religion. In contradistinction to Islam and Hinduism, Bhai Gurdas calls it by various names: *Nirmal Panth*; *Gurmukh Marg*; *Gurmukh Panth*; *Gurmukh Gaadi Rah*, etc., suggesting a totally new religion.³⁰ In this context, Guru Amar Das's perception of Sikhism in relation to Hinduism is worth quoting:

The Six systems of the Hindus are prevalent today,
but the Guru's School is unparalleled.
Liberation is attained by absorbing the Guru's philosophy.
Through the Guru's school, the world finds liberation.
The Guru's philosophy brings everlasting joy.³¹

Significantly, during the pontificate of the Third Master, the Sikhs had emerged as a distinct socio-religious entity. When Guru Amar Das was on a visit to Kurukshetra and Haridwar, he along with his entourage, was not subjected to pilgrimage tax, levied on the Hindus to visit their holy places.³² Evidently, in the eyes of State officials, Sikhs had ceased to be a part of the Hindu society. It was the first occasion in early Sikh history that an outsider had recognized them as a separate entity. Later on, Emperor Jahangir, while pronouncing his judgement against Guru Arjun Dev, had acknowledged the fact that Hindus as well as Muslims were rushing to the Sikh 'Shop',³³ which was certainly different from other 'Shops'. Obviously, the early Sikhs had not only become conscious of their entity, but they had also acquired the features of a recognizable identity.

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6. "Varan Bhai Gurdas", (Ed. by Hazara Singh and Bhai Vir Singh) Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1962; Var, 11.24-31.
7. "Dabistan", p. 58.
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28. These points have been collected from various *vars*: 1.23; 6.12; 7.1; 23.20; 28.18; 29.11.
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SIKH IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF RESURGENT MODERN INDIA

Gurtej Singh

Stirrings for independence in the Punjab started with the very first dawn of political subjugation. Its earliest articulation was provided by Bhai Maharaj Singh, Baba Ram Singh Kuka and the Nirankaris of Hazro. As an immediate reaction to the banishment of Ranee Jindan, Bhai Maharaj Singh decided to make a bid against all odds, at saving the Commonwealth of the People or *Sarkar Khalsa Jio*. In 1847-49, he undertook a tour of the Punjab villages for rousing the people in defence of their State. He intensified his activity after annexation in 1849. He gave up the calling of a social reformer and a saint to become a soldier in the service of his people.¹ Baba Ram Singh was a Sikh soldier who is known to have escaped execution by jumping into the river after a fierce battle with the English. He straight away donned the clothes of a saint on the way to becoming a rebel. He started his work in earnest on the Baisakhi day of 1857. The Nirankaris of Hazro were convinced reformers who began the battle which culminated in the semi-political Singh Sabha, and eventually merged with the people's passion for freedom expressed through the Shiromani Akali Dal.

In Bengal, the spirit of liberty first manifested itself through the *Brahmo Samaj* movement of Raja Rammohan Roy (May 22, 1772-September 27, 1833). He honestly analysed the major failings of the Hindu religion, and proceeded to remove them in a very thorough and dispassionate manner. He drew up a radical agenda for social reform. Significantly, under him, *Brahmo Samaj* did not aim at resurrecting the ancient practices of Hinduism, but at transforming them. Cross-fertilization with both indigenous living faiths and exotic vibrant creeds, was deliberately sought. It was an experiment of far-reaching consequence, and had the potential of transforming Hindu society beyond recognition. The movement was well received by the educated elite. The desire, thus expressed, for radical reform in religion, was the

country's nascent yearning for political freedom. The wide sweep of reform was an expression of nailing political failure at the door of religion; perhaps very validly so. National awakening had to begin as a primary socio-religious concern.

In 1828, the year of founding the *Brahmo Samaj*, Raja Ram-mohan Roy wrote, "I regret to say, that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus, is not well calculated to promote their political interest. The distinction of castes introducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions amongst them, has entirely deprived them of patriotic feelings, and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws of purification have totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort".²

Another expression of India's weariness with slavery was the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. It was a powerful but rudimentary articulation. The course that India appeared to be taking was that of radical socio-religious reform and of militant political action. The ultimate result of such an undertaking could only be freedom from foreign yoke. India indeed was on the royal road to freedom.

There is no doubt that the *Brahmo Samaj* movement in the East of India, can be termed the true precursor of all efforts towards establishing the self-respect of Indians. It was characterized by honesty of approach in evaluating the major failings of the Hindu religion, and it suggested solutions it thought were required to thoroughly rid it of outdated concepts. The years from 1833 to 1866 comprise its most glorious period. It had arisen as a protest movement against Brahminism, which during the centuries of political subjugation had overpowered all aspects of Hinduism. This also constituted its greatest limitation. This essentially retrogressive development had been tolerated and even encouraged during the period of alien political domination, for it proved efficient in preserving a version, however deficient, of Hinduism. The caste system was looked upon as an armour and a fortress of sorts in one context: in the new circumstances, it was fast becoming its grave. Brahmanism was so intertwined with Hinduism, that it was impossible to separate it for elimination. In that context, *Brahmo Samaj* could have had only a limited potential, unless it undertook radical reform — almost a complete transformation. This

is what Raja Rammohan Roy had aimed at. Particularly, on the point of image worship, he was totally non-compromising, and it was the major source of his acrimonious relations with his own father who was an ardent image worshiper.

Debendranath Tagore (1817-1833) became its head after the founder. In 1858, he appointed Keshab Chandra Sen as Acharya of the movement. Sen was a dynamic man and an able organizer; under him it made substantial progress. He was a man of radical views very much like that of the founder. Branches were established outside, and in Bengal itself 54 branches were set up. The first *Brahmo Samaj* in the Punjab was established at Lahore in 1864. He organized the *Sangat Sabha* (in 1862) and the *Braham Bandhu* Society (in 1863) as part of the *Brahmo Samaj* movement. Keshab Chandra was much closer to the revolutionary thought of Raja Rammohan Roy. His appointment in 1858 is significant, for it indicates the direction the *Samaj* was expected to take. His liberal and cosmopolitan views, were more in conformity with the original concepts, and yet they eventually became the cause of a split. Had the movement continued on its course unhindered, it had the potential of becoming an efficient vehicle for expression of people's opinion on social and political matters. Its effectiveness was compromised by the split of 1866. From his elucidation in "The Meaning of Brahmoism", it is apparent that Debendranath had succumbed to the claims of Brahminism. This comprised his manifesto of "gradualism". Henceforth, he held out a promise of "being at one with Orthodox Hinduism" and of accepting the image worship as valid "for the help of those who are incapable of grasping the highest Truth". To this extent it was a deviation from the ideals of original Brahmoism. On the excuse of being, "separated from the greater body which we would guide and uplift", Brahmos became aware "of proceeding too fast". They now accepted to be "in and of the great Hindu community" with a firm desire to "hold up as a beacon the highest truths of the Hindu *shastras*".³ It was this faction which later came to prevail as *Adi Brahmo Samaj*.

The decision taken by Debendranath indicates that, he had arrived at two vital decisions by 1866. One, that radical changes in the Hindu faith were now no longer necessary. And the other, that the struggle for establishing the pride of the Hindu nation of which the *Samaj* had ample potential, had somehow become irrelevant.

Do we have an explanation for this complete turn around?

In retrospect, the decision to instruct the Indians in the English tongue became the first step which culminated in the freedom of the country in 1947. This fateful decision was made by the vote of one newcomer to India. The Committee of Public Instructions had been divided evenly on whether to impart traditional education to Indians in Sanskrit and Arabic or to impart European education in English. The decision was, in the circumstances, left to T. B. Macaulay (1800-1859) who became President of the Committee in 1934 and was also the Law Member of the Executive Council of the Governor General of India. The decision of March 07, 1835 taken in favour of the English tongue by the Governor General was taken on his recommendation. With remarkable prescience, Macaulay had already prophesied in 1833, "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects to a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will come, I know not. But never will I attempt to avert it or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history".⁴ Macaulay did not come a day too soon to help in the fulfilment of his own prophecy. That the far reaching effect of the epic decision taken was not realized immediately in India can be safely assumed.

The same, however, cannot be said of the Government of India Act 1858. By this Act, the Government of India was taken over by the Crown from the East India Company, and was made responsible to the British Parliament through the Secretary of State for India. It was clear that henceforth, progressive association of the people of India with the governance of the country was assured by the system of democratic control prevalent in England. The Government responsible to the English Parliament would also have to take the governed into account, and would have to be progressively amenable to an increasing degree of control by the governed.

This idea was further strengthened by Queen Victoria's Proclamation to the Princes, Chiefs and Peoples of India, November 01, 1858. Inclusion of the word, "Peoples" in the address was itself significant. In it, she promised to "administer the government for the

benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward".⁵

The actual association of the Indians with the functioning of government began as a result of the Indian Council Act of August 01, 1861. Some non-officials were, for the first time, associated with the governance of the country.

It is not far-fetched to assert that as a result of all these measures, it was possible for the perceptive people to conclude that Great Britain had declared its intention of seeing India develop into a sovereign independent entity at some date in the distant future. This promise was spelt out by the above mentioned three events. It is apparent that an important section of the Indian population took the promise seriously. It has happened elsewhere also, "the establishment of Parliamentary institutions in Canada by the British North America Act, 1867, indicated the line of Colonial development towards self-governing institutions, and set before educated Indians the same goals as were being pursued in British Colonies like Canada", observes Seervai.⁶ The theme, that the Empire would fade away in due course, was later elucidated by Rudyard Kipling in his poem "Recessional" published on July 17, 1897.⁷

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday,
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre."

For perceptive leaders, no distant future is too distant in the life of nations. Ideologues of rival Indian nations started preparing for the event in such a manner as would eventually safeguard the interests of the people they represented. As the implications of the promise percolated further, and as the dream materialized in successive Government of India Acts, the preparations were intensified. The nature and intensity of the response to the situation varied from nation to nation in India.

It is clear that the initial intention of *Brahmo Samaj* was to transform Hinduism into an efficient instrument for realizing the Hindu aspirations in the modern world. For this purpose, *Brahmo Samaj* sought to rid it of the dross it had gathered over the centuries.

The underlying political purpose of the transformation is implicit in the undertaking. It is also reasonable to suppose that the far-reaching programme of reform could not have been initiated, unless it was felt that the society would accept it. That the society was not lagging far behind the leaders of the movement, is indicated by the immense popularity of the movement under Keshab Chandra Sen. It is also equally obvious that the Hindu mind readily accepted Tagore's new interpretation amounting to a complete reversal of the original ideas. How did they come to believe in so short a time, eight years to be precise, that Hinduism now had no need for a radical reform? Was it now realized that sooner than earlier expected, Hindus were going to be politically at the helm of affairs by virtue of their overwhelming numbers?

It is possible to argue that the views of Tagore and those who followed him were influenced by the realization of the deeper import of Government of India Act and of Queen's Proclamation mentioned before. It is certain that in the meanwhile, they felt assured by the promise of maintenance of the "ancient rights, usages and customs of India" contained in the Proclamation.

It is reasonable to suppose that the complete reversal of policies would not have taken place, unless Hindu leaders had felt reassured on both matters of vital concern. The attempt at radical religious reform and the political programme it was to inspire, could only be abandoned, if it was felt that political objectives would be realized otherwise. In that event, there would be plenty of time for religious reform, and the urgency for it no longer existed. It is suggested that such indeed was the case.

It is also significant that henceforth determined attempts were made to contain the growth of Sikhism, a truly revolutionary creed of tested credentials. To illustrate the point, we may here quote the much reproduced secret report of D. Petri, Assistant Director of Criminal Intelligence. It is dated August 11, 1911, and is meant for the Government of India. In the section summing up 'Development of Sikh Politics (1901-1911)' his report says, "Hinduism has always been hostile to Sikhism, whose Gurus powerfully and successfully attacked the principle of the caste system, which is the foundation on which the whole fabric of Brahminism has been reared. The activities of the Hindus have therefore been constantly directed to undermining of

Sikhism both by preventing the children of Sikh fathers from taking *Pahul* and by reducing professed Sikhs from their allegiance to their faith. Hinduism has strangled Buddhism, once a formidable rival to it, and it has already made serious inroads into the domain of Sikhism".

The thought of spreading radical political philosophy was also abandoned. As an outstanding example of the latter, we may recall that Bhagat Singh (1907-1931) and his colleagues were hanged with the express consent of the Congress and particularly that of Gandhi, the prophet of non-violence. Subhash Chander Bose was hounded out of India for adopting a revolutionary approach for attaining freedom of the country. Perhaps greater significance needs to be attached to the abandoning of the Non-Cooperation movement midway, after the Chauri Chaura incident. Previously, Gandhi had announced resorting to a mass civil disobedience movement in Bardoli taluqa. This incident took place on February 05, 1922 at Chauri Chaura of Gorakhpur district, when processionists set fire to a police station, hacked to pieces the policemen who tried to escape, and thus killed all twenty-two of them. As a reaction, Gandhi withdrew the movement to the utter bewilderment of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chander Bose, C.R. Das and a host of others.

II

Since freedom was perceived to be definitely on the way, it was no longer the primary concern. The different aspirants to national status in free India now concentrated solely on exploring ways and means of garnering more influence at the time of independence than that strictly warranted by the numerical strength. Hindus, *Dalits*, Muslims and Sikhs were the main contenders, with the Indian princely States facing a battle which was being progressively lost with every new dawn. Hindus were playing for the highest stakes. They hoped to emerge absolutely at the top by the sheer weight of numbers. There is also no doubt that the alternative of Pakistan was considered at a very early date, certainly before the Muslims ever thought of it. For them, to the very end, it remained a bargaining counter for securing parity with the Hindus. Muslims did not entertain wild dreams, their struggle was only to secure their due share of the sovereignty. *Dalits* were not in a position to take independent action. Sikhs alone were impatient

for freedom, they did not trust the vagaries of time and continued fighting fierce battles befitting true lovers of liberty.

The above statement is true of the years between 1866 and 1947 and makes nonsense of the patriotic pretensions of the leading 'freedom fighters' of Congress origin. Most of the contending parties remained smug in the perception that India was to be eventually endowed with democratic institutions on the English model. These parties never even doubted that time has often, in the past, conceived something and delivered something quite different. Their primary concern, therefore, remained merely to render their respective peoples effective and homogeneous. Meanwhile, all that remained for them to do, was to draw as much advantage from the projected gradual constitutional progress as they could.

As soon as the Hindus realized that freedom was on the conveyor-belt of history, they gave up radical reform altogether. On the contrary, henceforth, all attention was given to conservation and revivalism. It was time only for more aggressively indigenous philosophy to thrive. Such a philosophy needed to have two distinct features. Firstly it was required to have a form which could attract the votaries of the revolutionary Sikh faith; and secondly, it was to be firmly rooted in the ancient texts of Hinduism. That calling was answered by Dayanand (1824-83) and his *Arya Samaj*. The call for going "Back to the Vedas" was given, and a philosophy very similar in form to Sikhism was projected. Having failed in Gujarat, the land of his birth and that of the *Arya Samaj*, (first *Arya Samaj* was founded at Rajkot in 1875), Dayanand turned his attention to the Punjab. Ironically, he was welcomed here by the Sikhs, who thought Hinduism was renewing itself in *Arya Samaj* and would in future be much nearer to Sikhism. He delivered his first sermons to the Punjabis from gurdwaras.

Having earned so much of goodwill amongst the Sikhs and having evolved so many ideas which betray a direct influence of Sikhism, the *Swamy* suddenly and without any ostensible reason, turned firmly and aggressively against the Sikhs. He sowed the seeds of never-ending confrontation by attacking the Sikh Gurus and Sikhism in his *Satyarthparkash*. It is naive to think that he did so in ignorance. A careful look at the Ten Principles of the *Arya Samaj* formulated by him, is enough to reveal that most of them have been derived from

basic Sikh spiritual postulates; the second one is almost a paraphrase of the Sikh *mulmantra*. His clear design was to provide a look-alike alternative to Sikhism in a bid to save ancient Hinduism and to wipe out the original Sikh model in one stroke. Was *Arya Samaj* only an attempt to eliminate Sikhism from the reckoning when the time came for free India to make vital spiritual decisions? It also certainly aimed at consolidating Hinduism by instilling pride in the Vedas and by giving it a somewhat new look by the new emphasis.

Significantly, *Arya Samaj* propounded aggressive Hindu nationalism. It aimed at carrying out certain reforms in Hinduism, and laid emphasis on bringing back all those who had converted to other faiths at different times in history. For this purpose, it started the *shudhi* or reconversion movement. Books like 'Sikh Hindu Hain' were promoted in pursuance of this philosophy. It was in this context that Lajpat Rai discovered, "the tiny barge of *Arya Samaj* was at that time to me the barge of Hindu nationality". Between the years 1891 and 1900, *Arya Samajis* were gradually allowed to assume the leadership of the entire Punjab Congress. It would later be shared with a more promising group.

In all these years, we do not notice a genuine quest for a really elevating philosophy. We do not find the soul of India genuinely prospecting for a liberating and elevating faith. That yearning was pronounced with those who founded the *Brahmo Samaj* but vanished with those who reformed it.

It was only the *shudra*, the downtrodden, whom 'old wine in new bottles' did not attract. It was only he for whom there was no liberation without a liberating faith. He knew where the shoe pinched, and he was not satisfied with show and make believe. To use Abraham Lincoln's parable, *Harijan* was not satisfied 'with the soup of the shadow of a chicken which had been starved to death'. He looked around with an eagle's eye, and after piercing all the show windows, his gaze came to rest on Sikhism. He was the only one, who did not create a make believe world, because he was in a genuine quest for real salvation. He eagerly looked around for light, and again and again his heart turned instinctively to the sun of Sikhism. As a part of his centuries old bondage, he was not allowed to have a say even in such an important spiritual matter concerning himself. Nevertheless, he

made bold attempts and was well supported by a section of the Hindu leadership. It is then that M. K. Gandhi simultaneously assumed the incarnations of both Mohini and Rudra to wean him away. As Mohini, the eternal seductress, he offered the carrots of reservation; as Rudra he threatened with the wrath of Hindudom and undertook a fast unto death to whip it up. Against both, the poor *Dalit*, as he now likes to be addressed, could not defend himself. Such is his bondage that it also drains him of the daring to even tinker with his chains.

In his proposal Dr Moonje said that, "Hindu *Maha Sabha* would not object to the conversion of Depressed classes to Sikhism and to the inclusion of neo-Sikhs in the list of the scheduled castes for the enjoyment of benefits of the Poona Pact, if Ambedkar promised to prefer Sikhism to Islam and Christianity, to co-operate with the Hindus and the Sikhs in propagating sincerely to counteract the Muslim movement for drawing the Depressed classes into the Muslim fold, and to propagate and live within the Hindu culture".⁸

Sikhism appeared as an alternative to the depressed classes looking for real spiritual rebirth. It also satisfied the Hindu *Maha Sabha*. Looked at from several angles, Sikhism should have eminently served the purpose of an alternative. It was non-Semitic in inspiration. It preserved all that was best in the indigenous faiths, and was at the same time an efficient vehicle for propelling India into the modern age. From the compliments of imitation paid to it by almost all the progressive religious and social movements in India, it is apparent that it was so looked upon by immediate originators of these movements.

During this short paper, we will notice that its efficacy will be recognized several times, and it will be ignored as many times, for the ultimate aim was perhaps to preserve the Hindu faith with all the undesirable elements which had crept into it over the centuries. Was it in the erroneous belief that such an admixture was indeed Hinduism? That is certainly not so, or there would not have been repeated attempts at giving a pronounced impression that reforms are being carried out. It is also possible that it was a profound philosophical realization that Hinduism could exist only if it was preserved as a whole with all its faults and non-essentials? Gandhi's own views of what constituted Hinduism are very enlightening. He, for instance, affirms faith in *vamashrama dharma*, idol worship and the caste system, as he believed, these to have originally prevailed.⁹ Ambedkar, for instance, is of the

opinion, that Hinduism can never be reformed. Modern *Dalit* intellectuals have the same observation to make on the subject. "... must know that our national character — dishonesty, envy, deceit, betrayal, treachery, etc. — are the direct result of our value system, the Hindu value system, which is a by-product of our Brahminical religion. If we have to get rid of these ugly traits, we have to get rid of our value system. And if we have to get rid of our value system, our religion has to go. Nothing short of this".¹⁰ Either it thrives as it is, or is thrown out lock stock and barrel. Are these the only choices? Is it possible that the leaders of Hindu thought like Gandhi and Nehru were possessed by this dilemma in the heart of their hearts? Or was it the projected political effectiveness which dictated arrogant cynicism and made them impervious to the requirement of much needed genuine change?

From the point of view of those who saw Sikhism as a hindrance in the way of realization of Hindu destiny, the time to assert Hindu hegemony was ripe. To a motivated observer like Dayanand coming from afar, Sikhs and Sikhism were on bad days in the Punjab. To him and the likes of him, who could not distinguish the world of matter from that of the spirit, the census figures gave a message they wanted to hear. It was obvious from these that Christianity was gaining ground here, apparently at the cost of Sikhism. The following figures (in brackets), of the steadily increasing Christian population are relevant; 1881 (3,796), 1891 (19,547), 1901 (37,980), 1911 (1,63,994), 1921 (3,15,931). It was natural for people like Dayanand to assume that the iron was hot and it was time to strike.

Another organization which also thought of claiming the Sikhs for itself was the Punjab Hindu *Sabha*. Besides the *Arya Samaj*, this body sought to exploit the current simulated discomfiture of the Sikh people. It was founded in 1909. It marks the beginning of undisguised Hindu communal ideology in politics. It, presumably for the sake of form, derided the Congress as a party which offended the Government, help of which was necessary for defeating the Muslims. Lal Chand, one of its founders, declared that, "a Hindu should not only believe but make it a part and parcel of his organism, of his life and his conduct, that he is a Hindu first and an Indian afterwards".¹¹ It aimed at consolidating and increasing the Hindu population by bringing different sects and denominations within the ambit of Hinduism. Strange as it may seem, the Hindu *Sabha* was composed of both *Arya Samajist* and

Sanatanist Hindu elements. Almost in the year of its birth, it had replaced the defunct Congress bodies in most of the districts. One of its important conferences was held in 1915, when it was decided to make it an all India body. It was attended by M.K. Gandhi, Madan Mohan Malviya, Raja Narendra Nath, Lajpat Rai, Gokal Chand Narang, Ganpat Rai and other prominent persons. Its aim was conceived to be the consolidation and proliferation of the Hindu identity, particularly in the Punjab with a view to safeguarding Hindu electoral interests. It gave new definition of Hinduism by including Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs within it. That it was not a stray thought, is apparent from the fact that the same provision was incorporated in Article 25 of the Constitution of free India in 1950. The *Hindu Sabha* attempted to thwart the efforts of those who would assert their identity independent of Hindu reference and to pull back all those of other faiths who were amenable to be drawn into the Hindu fold.

Hindu *Sabha's* displeasure with the Congress was misplaced, for it was working on the same proposition by other means. In a book written by an anonymous author, and published by the *Nawab* of Mamdot, Gandhi's tell-tale relationship with the Congress after October 1934, was examined. "Then the conduct of Mr. Gandhi in retiring from the Congress to carry on his *Harijan* work and at the same time remaining the supreme authority in that organization is not without significance. What is the reason for playing this double role? He retired from the Congress to consolidate the position of the Hindu community internally by permanently bridging over the social gulf between 16 *crore* high castes and 8 *crore* low castes and to remove all chances of the latter's leaving the Hindu fold..."¹² He goes on to assert that this nominal retirement was to save the Congress from the criticism of being communal. The secular pretension was found useful for the purpose of garnering support for the Hindu cause from the liberal minded and the ideologically unclear people from amongst the Muslims, *Dalits* and Sikhs. Such was the degree of success that even enlightened people like Maulana Azad were taken in. Realization, that the Congress was a partisan body with strong communal tendencies, dawned on him only around 1946, when he was in no position to extricate himself. In his book, 'India Wins Freedom' he quotes incident after incident to expose the essential communal nature of the Congress.¹³ In doing so, he did not only put the record straight for posterity, but also made amends for

the frenzy that had earlier possessed his brain. That it made no difference to the infinite misery inflicted upon generation after generation of the people he had misled by his example is, of course, quite another matter.

Gandhi did not defend the Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League, and let it be torn to pieces by the communal Hindus. In contrast, he undertook a fast unto death to force the Poona Pact down the *Dalit* throat. This has been commented upon by the above mentioned anonymous author, "Could the absence of feeling in one case and its abundant presence in the other be ascribed to nationalism? ... In other words, his conception of 'justice' is relative to the Hindu society and he does not believe in moral justice, the very basis of ethics." This may be taken to be evidence of the contemporary Muslim assessment of Gandhi's character and the essential nature of his work.

The Sikh response to the situation came in two phases. In the earlier phase, it was purely social, cultural and religious, for that was the perceived nature of the initial challenge before them. Matters were brought to a head by a dramatic historical event. The threatened conversion to Christianity of four students of a Missionary School at Amritsar in the summer of 1873, alarmed the Sikhs. Simultaneously, Shardha Ram Phillauri, by now an *Arya Samaji* preacher, was doing his worst at *Guru Ka Bagh*, the very doorstep of *Sri Darbar Sahib*. In reaction to these, the first *Singh Sabha* was formed at Amritsar in July 1873, 'to propagate the true Sikh religion' and to remove illiteracy amongst the Sikhs. In about twentyfive years, the number of *Singh Sabhas* had risen to 121 all over the Punjab. To co-ordinate the efforts of all these bodies, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was founded in October 1901. These bodies were purely religious to begin with, and came into being as a reaction to the Christian and Hindu religious onslaughts on Sikhism.

An account of the preparations made by the Muslim nation for the coming event is fascinating, but need not be discussed in detail for no widely divergent views about the Muslim strategy are held. Origin of the effort can be traced to the commendable farsightedness of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Sir Agha Khan. That the Muslims totally depended on constitutional development, to bring them freedom is common knowledge. Their leader did not resort to agitational ap-

proach and never sent a single protagonist of Pakistan to jail, is a fact of history. Their leaders frankly concentrated upon making the *millat* more cohesive. That, combined with mass agitational approach between 1945 and 1947, proved to be quite sufficient in the eventual reckoning.

III

The Sikhs appear to have been the last to respond to the exciting political developments. "The closing decade of the last century was a period of serious searching of the hearts in all communities in the Punjab. The Sikhs were the last to awaken to a self-consciousness of their glorious heritage. It was a silent process. Slowly and almost imperceptibly they felt the new impulse creeping through the younger members of the community", observes Ruchi Ram Sahni.¹⁵ Only after the promulgation of reforms based on The Montagu-Chelmsford Report of July 1918, did they show a partial awareness of the vastly changed political situation. They made a good beginning by demanding separate electorate for themselves. To pursue this goal, the Central Sikh League was formed on December 30, 1919. The Gurdwaras Reform Movement, aimed at wresting control from the corrupt, hereditary, Hinduized custodians of the Sikh shrines, started almost simultaneously with the formation of the League. It had a potential of spilling over into the political sphere, as it was the Government's policy to keep the Sikh shrines under its own control.¹⁶ Theo-political nature of the gurdwaras was otherwise also well known. In spite of this, a sincere attempt was made by both the Colonial Government and the Sikhs to keep the matter of control of shrines a non-political affair.

Though initially not inclined to let the Sikhs control their shrines, the Government seems to have reconciled itself to the eventuality. May be, because, to begin with, it saw no tendency amongst the Sikhs to make political capital out of it. It was, therefore, with very little difficulty and almost no resistance from the authorities, that the Sikhs were able to gain control of Gurdwara *Babe-ki-Ber* Sialkot (September 1920), *Sri Darbar Sahib* (October 12, 1920), *Sri Akal Takht*, gurdwaras at Panja Sahib (December 1920), Sacha Sauda (December 1920), Tarn Taran (January 1921), *Guru ka Bagh* Gurdwara (January 31, 1921), several other small gurdwaras and finally *Nankana Sahib* (February 22,

1921). Simultaneously, with the occupation of shrines, the Sikhs took steps to organize themselves both religiously as well as politically. Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) was formed (on October 14, 1920) and the first unit of the Shiromani Akali Dal was organized on December 24, 1920. Shiromani Akali Dal itself came into existence on January 24, 1921 at the *Akal Takht*.

The total effect of all these measures was the increasing emphasis on the evolution of independent Sikh identity. The socio-political climate prevailing within Hindu India, was fundamentally opposed to this development. Hindu organizations took specific measures to contain and nullify this very significant growth. In this destructive activity, M.K. Gandhi and his Congress were quite prominent. The subsequent history of all out confrontation between the Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, particularly after the partition of the country, is the logical outcome of the policy adopted by the responsible Hindu organizations at this juncture. It is certain that the full implication of the Hindu stance was not worked out by the Sikhs then; no attempt was made to understand the underlying deep coherent thought that inspired the stance adopted. And not much attention has been paid to it by the Sikh historians ever since. Yet, it is difficult to correctly understand the present problem in the Punjab without reference to the philosophy that dominated the Hindu mind at that point of history, and has since become the permanent baggage of Hindu mental equipment in resurgent India.

The end result of the stirrings within the Sikh community was affirmation of a separate Sikh identity based on the sovereign status of Sikh dispensation. Clearly, it was diametrically opposed to the fundamental stance adopted by the Hindu people, particularly after 1866.

IV

Studying the Gurdwara Reform Movement, one is struck with the obvious fact that the local Hindus, and their leaders at the state and national levels made a determined bid to thwart the Sikh efforts. Local Hindus, particularly at Panja Sahib and Nankana Sahib, co-operated with the corrupt *mahants* and gathered in large numbers to physically resist the Sikh takeover. Their political leaders, including Lala Lajpat Rai and M.K. Gandhi did their best to dissuade the Sikhs from their undertaking. A graphic eyewitness account of all this is fortunately

preserved for us by Narain Singh.¹⁷ The aforementioned Hindu Sabha issued a circular letter to all orthodox Hindu bodies in the Punjab asking them to resist any changes in the mode of worship and the system of administration in the gurdwaras. By this circular of April 04, 1921, Hindu representation was also to be demanded on the administration boards if any were set up for the gurdwaras. Hindu leaders in the Punjab Legislative Council opposed the Gurdwara Bill tooth and nail. Harkishan Lal and Ganpat Rai, who (the latter) was also a legal adviser to Mahant Narain Dass of *Nankana Sahib*, were most prominent in opposing the Bill. Punjab Legislative Council debates show how bitterly and vehemently Sikh representatives like Professor Jodh Singh and Sunder Singh Majithia contradicted the views of the Hindu members. Eventually, the services of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya had to be requisitioned to obtain the consent of the Hindus of the Punjab for the Sikh Gurdwara Legislation.¹⁸

At that juncture, Gandhi was not the man to go about it as crudely as the rest. He spearheaded the diplomatic offensive. To begin with, he aimed at subsuming the Akali movement in the overall Congress movement. He was one of the earliest persons to realize that independent expression of Sikh identity would be detrimental to the Hindu imperialistic designs. To the Akali band proceeding to take over *Panja Sahib* Gurdwara, Gandhi sent a message. It was brought by Amar Singh Jhabal who met them on the way to Lahore. The message was; 'by the end of the year *Swaraj* will be obtained. Taking over gurdwaras is worthless activity. Co-operate with the Congress and all will be well'. Leader of the band, Kartar Singh Jhabbar did not agree with Gandhi's assessment or his proposition. His reply to Amar Singh was, 'I do not think *Swaraj* will come about so soon. But in the event of that happening, our gurdwaras will be in greater danger. Independent India will be synonymous with Hindu *Raj*. The present regime has no religious rivalry with the Sikhs, and it does not mind the takeover of gurdwaras by us. In the Hindu *Raj* we will not be allowed even to come near the gurdwaras because of religious antagonism. We will therefore go to *Panja Sahib*'.

Another similar attempt was made by him after the great tragedy at *Nankana Sahib*. He asked the Sikhs to boycott the Courts and to appoint a non-official enquiry committee to probe the event. He

promised himself to head the committee thus appointed. The Sikhs promptly rejected the offer. Sohan Singh Josh particularly blames Harbans Singh Attari for the rejection and regrets it.²⁰ Subsequent events revealed that it was perhaps the best course.

One important aim of taking over the shrines was to purge them of Hindu influence, which had been encouraged both by the British administration and the Hindus for obvious reasons. On March 04, 1924, Gandhi wrote to the Akalis expressing anguish over the matter of "a Hindu temple within the precincts of the Golden Temple" being "destroyed by the Akalis".²¹ He sought an assurance "that the movement is neither anti-Hindu nor anti-any other race or creed". He also wanted them to affirm "that the SGPC has no desire for the establishment of *Sikh Raj*".²² The Akalis in their reply went a step further than was reasonably correct, to say, "The SGPC is purely a religious body and has no desire for the establishment of *Sikh Raj*. We have repeatedly declared it whenever any reflection has been cast on our intentions by Govt. So far, this baseless charge has been trotted out only by the Govt., who may be interested in maligning us and creating reversion (sic.) against us among other communities. It is most painful to us that it should have been necessary to have to make this explanation even to you. Not only SGPC but no other Sikh body or individual entertains even in dream any idea or desire of establishing *Sikh Raj*."²³

That did not convince him. Nothing ever was destined to do so. It was the case of the tender little lamb having abused the terribly hungry wolf last year.

In the beginning of the letter quoted above, Gandhi revealed a desire "to guide the movement". The Sikhs appear to have committed the sin of ignoring his 'very generous' offer. His only aim was to firmly control the Sikh movement for the purpose of establishing Hindu hegemony and thwarting the establishment of the Khalsa identity. The only choice that he ever gave to the Sikhs was to choose between being eliminated or committing suicide. When he became convinced that the Sikhs insisted upon retaining their independence, their identity and the distinct character of their movement, he most irrationally and most violently turned against them. Henceforth, he sought nothing less than the complete obliteration of the separate Sikh identity and the dissolution of the Order of the Khalsa. This is the destiny he had reserved for

the Sikhs under all circumstances — so much for his non-violence.

From his speeches at the prayer meetings in Delhi just before his death, it is apparent that nothing short of the complete renunciation of Sikh religious identity and absolute merger into the Hindu fold would satisfy him. However, for the sake of seeming reasonable and sufficiently non-communal, he directed his pungent diatribes only at the Order of the Khalsa and the Sikh *Rahit* prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh whom he characterized as "a misguided patriot". It mattered little to him that he was the *Jagatguru*, the guide of mankind, and hence, in the wonderful phrase of the memorable sermon, "a patriot to heaven alone". He wanted the Sikhs to shed the outward symbols of their faith, which gave them a distinct appearance and the *kirpan* which signified adherence to a unique philosophy.

The initial impression about Gandhi can be, that at least to begin with, he was quite fair to the Sikhs. His telegram which was received by Baba Kharak Singh on January 19, 1922, on the successful conclusion of *Guru Ka Bagh Morcha* tends to be cited as evidence of this phase of his relationship with the Sikhs. It was quite eulogistic, "First decisive battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations!" As one goes along, one finds that, this was only an attempt to maintain the form and to keep the *mayajal* in good shape and properly camouflaged under such innocuous verbiage.

Though he publicly praised the prowess of the Sikhs during the struggle for reform in the Sikh shrines, he was seething with disgust in the heart of his hearts. Sangat Singh has quoted 'Yajnik' to show the hatred and disgust that Gandhi really harboured for the Sikhs, even while he felt obliged to say a few good words for them in public. "In mid-May 1923, Indulal K. Yajnik was transferred to stay with Gandhi in Yerwada Jail. He discussed with Gandhi "about the wonderful heroism and disciplined suffering of the Akali Sikhs, who carried out a most extraordinary species of *satyagraha* against their corrupt temple priests, and, against the Government forces allied with them". Gandhi was most disagreeable — "He told me that he had read a good deal of literature about the Sikh religion and the Sikh religious campaigns, and also knew the Akalis by experience, and he had come to the conclusion that their campaign fell far short of true *satyagraha*, for he had no doubt that they harboured violence in their hearts even when they appeared

to welcome a hailstorm of bullets, swords and spears with apparent equanimity. Even the large numbers in which they marched on Nankana, and other shrines, served to show that they harboured in their hearts a species of violence. Hurt at such adverse judgment, I brought to his notice the generous encomium that had been showered on them by no less a person than Mr. C.F. Andrews, who had seen them with his own eyes, these hefty men beaten and even killed during their successive struggles without even an attempt to retaliation. He heard all this and much more that I put before him. But while expressing the warmest admiration for their heroism, he rigidly stuck to his conclusion and refused to give his saintly blessing to such a semi-militant movement.²⁴

Near about this time Jawaharlal Nehru also radically changed his attitude towards the Sikhs. Symbolic as well as clear substantiative evidence of the change is available. His release from imprisonment at Nabha during the *Jaito Morcha* is some sort of a watershed between the two attitudes. His intended statement on the occasion is, "an eloquent expression of Nehru's admiration for the Sikhs, their indomitable courage and selfless sacrifice".²⁵ He is proud of associating with the cause that "the Sikhs have made their own", and of showing his "deep admiration for them by some form of service". Earlier also he had been equally enthusiastic about Ranjit Singh's "great Sikh state".

In his later incarnation, Nehru came to regard the Sikh Empire as "marginal state" not affecting the real struggle for supremacy against the British. His mental affiliations also changed radically and he sought to relate more and more exclusively to the Hindus of the Punjab.²⁶ He eventually joined in with Gandhi and for the rest of his life, entrenched himself in opposition to Sikh interests, however genuine, democratic or rational. He would not agree to reorganization of the State of the Punjab on linguistic basis, "whatever the merits of such a proposal might be".²⁷ His attitude towards the Sikhs is summed up as "emotional insanity" by Valabh Bhai Patel and as "madness" by a modern historian.

An explanation for this sudden change has been somewhat difficult to come by. Sangat Singh in his 'The Sikhs in History', which has appeared recently, has tried to gather some evidence that would explain the deep-rooted hatred which Nehru came to harbour for the

Sikhs. He says that Jawaharlal was a direct descendant of Gangu Brahman, the notorious cook in Guru Gobind Singh's service, who became responsible for the death of his younger children and his mother. On the evidence of people like Pindi Das Sodhi, Sangat Singh believes that this fact was brought to the notice of Jawaharlal Nehru by his father immediately after his release from Nabha jail. More plausible explanation, perhaps is that M.K. Gandhi sold his thesis to Nehru around this time. That he had already formulated such ideas, has been discussed above.

The effect of it, on the Congress party was more pronounced, hereafter. The issue of Gurdwara *Shahidganj*, Lahore became an explosive affair in the summer of 1935. The building stood on the site where thousands of Sikhs had been executed by the Mughal administration in the middle of the eighteenth century, and had been in the possession of the Sikhs for the last one century. A section of the Muslims were encouraged to whip up a statewide agitation for claiming it to be a Mosque. There were serious disturbances in the province, and police and army was called upon to quell them. Crowds were fired upon in Lahore. "The *Ahrars* who took the initiative, belonged to the minority of Punjabi Muslims whose political sympathies lie with the Congress, and the agitation was thought to have been inspired and perhaps financed by the Congress."²⁸

His secularism, not only in relation to the Sikhs, but also otherwise, was no more than skin deep. According to Charan Singh, his colleague and successor in office, it was just an instrument to garner electoral support. He further holds, and quite rightly so, that it is even contrary to the philosophy of Hinduism. "Nehru injected the word secularism into Indian polity. He did this for political gains to get Muslim votes — secularism, in any case, is alien to Indian thought and tradition".²⁹ It is possible to document the proposition that secular pretension was just another thread in the skillfully woven *inderjal*. So were his temptingly held out promises of an "area and a set-up in the North, wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom".³⁰ There were many more of the finely spun threads. We need not go over them again for ample attention has been focussed on them initially by Sirdar Kapur Singh and many others after him.

V

It appears reasonable to conclude that the first stirrings in the Sikh people at the beginning of this century were genuinely social and religious. Hindus firmly believed these to be the beginning of assertion of the separate Sikh identity. There is little doubt that this potential was inherent in the Sikh movement just as it is always present in all movements of the kind everywhere. It may, however, be difficult to sustain that this was the initial Sikh intention. That stage was reached as a reaction to persistent Hindu opposition to all genuine and somewhat innocent Sikh efforts during the period. Of the Hindu leaders of the period, particularly Gandhi and Nehru, had an inkling of how the political scenario was developing. They tried and failed to hitch the Sikh movement to the chariot wheels of the Congress. Henceforth, they decided to enforce their intentions by other available means. The *modus operandi* was simple: tall promises were to be solemnly made to the Sikhs, and were to be projected as holy oaths which the trusting Sikhs would never suspect as fake. Just as was foretold by Jinnah, 'the real mind' of the Congress was revealed only after obtaining complete freedom.

The Sikhs realized with the attainment of freedom and the promulgation of the new constitution, that all promises had been intended as mere subterfuge. Talk of obtaining the prior consent of the Sikhs for the constitution of new India had been an empty rhetoric, and projections about secular polity, autonomous confederating units, linguistic reorganization, reservation of seats for the minorities in the legislatures and in government jobs, limited powers to the central authority, and "the glow of freedom" to all constituents, particularly to the Sikh dominated area, simply proved to be some of the strands of the *mayajal*.

VI

India became free of foreign control in 1947. In real terms it meant all political power went to the permanent cultural majority. The Sikhs, at this stage, were expected to reconcile themselves to the euphemistically termed "changed circumstances". It was with this expectation that Master Tara Singh was put in prison for the first time in independent India. The excuse was untenable. He was proceeding by train to address a religious meeting at Delhi. It was in memory of

the martyrs of *Nankana Sahib*, and was to be held within the premises of the Gurdwara on the 19th and 20th of February, 1949. Home Minister of India, Patel, declared, "We shall not allow the Akali conference to be held in any shape or form".³¹ Master Tara Singh was taken off the train at Narela railway station and despatched to Benaras jail. He was expected to succumb to the threat of indefinite incarceration, to recant and jump on to the Congress bandwagon. After six months in the jail, the Home Minister found Tara Singh still holding fast to his faith "in the invincibility and integrity of the Panth and other similar ideas". What was expected of the Master can best be understood from what Patel wrote about Golwalkar of *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh* who "has come round to our view in several particulars" and has accepted "certain limitations within which he and the *Sangh* will work".³² By October, the position of Tara Singh was still the same, "There is no change whatsoever in his attitude".

The public stance of the Akali Dal and the Sikhs did not change either. They reacted by rejecting the Constitution, demanding their share of freedom, by asking for constitutional arrangements to safeguard their culture and traditions and by seeking the reorganization of the Punjab on the oft promised linguistic basis. This reaction was totally unexpected, and initiated the next phase of the struggle for preservation of Sikh identity and the integrity of the Panth. Since there were no constraints in this phase, as the political power firmly belonged to the Hindus, for all times to come, as it appeared, the period since 1947 is characterized by growing excessive violence against Sikhs and Sikhism. The high points were reached in 1984. The *mayajal* has now perhaps graduated to the much more elaborate *indrajal*. By this assertion it is meant that the efforts to malign the Sikhs have changed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Earlier, for instance, objections were taken to their attempts to control their own gurdwaras, now they are projected as seeking the carving out of an independent State of their own. Before 1947, assertion of their identity was a threat to the secretly cherished integrity of the Hindu society; now it is represented as a threat to the unity and integrity of the country. Since communal minded representatives of the majority are at the helm of affairs and totally control the apparatus of the Indian State, it is convenient and easy to project dissenters as enemies of the 'modern, socialist, democratic, secular State with an independent judiciary, lively press, effective human rights organizations and elected legislature'. Such is

the effect of the *inderjal* that the white is black and the black always white. To borrow an idea from that book of powerful satire, Alice in Wonderland, the question is not whether something can be presented as something entirely different; the question is who holds the magic wand of political power.

The problem is in the mind of the permanent cultural majority which wields infinite power of the modern State and will remain predominant as long as its political power endures. In the past, this overwhelming majority has always sought a violent solution to all problems of dissent. The violence with which the *Dalits* have been suppressed for centuries, is well known. The Buddhists were wiped out from India by the marauding hordes of Adi Shankracharya; vivisection of India was a solution to the existence of Muslims. History is repeating itself in the case of the Sikhs, and ever since independence no other solution except a violent one has ever been explored in relation to them and the Punjab. Violence is being harnessed to solve it now. Since effective camouflage of State violence is a practical possibility, power of modern propaganda is being harnessed for the purpose. The modern state apparatus of an amoral pseudo-secular state is nothing if not an efficient instrument of repression available to any brute majority. The oppressor has nothing to worry about: or, so he thinks. These are some of the facts which those contending with Sikh identity in modern India, perhaps ought to keep in mind.

VII

It is obvious from the above discussion that there was hardly anything like freedom movement in this country. Almost the entire Hindu political activity was aimed at dragging, particularly, the *Dalits* and the Sikhs into the Hindu fold. The Muslims were to be tolerated as subordinate partners until independence was attained and were presumably to be dealt with under the *shudhi* after that. The Sikhs being a small minority, were not expected to stand up to the might of the modern empire. Amongst the earliest political actions of M.K. Gandhi were, firstly, to destroy the secular character of the Home Rule League and the Indian National Congress; and secondly, to inject religion into politics. These bodies, meant for wider purposes were diverted to serve Hindu sectional interests. Concepts vital to the

existence of a healthy democracy were deliberately subverted. These were emptied of content and only the pale shadows of their forms were retained. Jinnah protested vehemently. He did not know what was cooking behind the scenes, but to his eternal credit, it must be admitted that he correctly divined that it was nothing healthy. In retrospect, the so called freedom movement was just intense political activity to establish Hindu political and cultural hegemony in India. History of the 'freedom movement' becomes much more cogent, rational, meaningful and easy to interpret, if the thesis presented in this chapter is accepted. Many of the anomalies which defy solutions in another context, tend to become intelligible when approached from this angle. It also becomes easier to explain the downright communal approach of the modern Indian State advertised as democratic, egalitarian and secular. Events like the killing of thousands of innocent Sikhs all over the country in broad daylight, while the written Constitution remained suspended, and the failure of the law enforcing machinery to punish known murderers, tend to at least become explainable.

Proper appreciation of the developments that comprise the so called freedom struggle may also make it easier to find a permanent solution for the ills which are poised to rip the country apart. It may become possible to formulate a theory for resolving the ugly conflict arising out of the Hindu hatred for the Sikhs. Very clearly, its basis is a political stance which is no more relevant today, since the empire of the permanent cultural majority is well established.

NOTES

1. Bhai Nahar Singh and Bhai Kirpal Singh, "Rebels Against The British Raj", Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1967.
2. Sophia Dobson Collet, "Life and Letters of Rammohan Roy," Calcutta, 1913, p.124. 312.
3. Quoted from "The Autobiography of Maharishi Debendranath Tagore", Calcutta, 1909, pp.610-11 by Dobbin, loc cit, pp.27-28.
4. Quoted by H.M. Seervai from his speech delivered in the House of Commons on July 10, 1833, on the India Bill 1833 C-1, in "Partition Of India: Legend And Reality", 1991, p.1.

5. Christine E. Dobbin, "Basic Documents in the Development of Modern India and Pakistan 1835-1947", Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, London, 1970, p. 22.
6. Seervai op. cit., p. 3.
7. Kapur Singh, "*Sachi Sakhi*", (Punjabi), Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1979, p.16.
8. See, Keer, "Ambedkar: Life & Mission", p.269, quoted by V.T. Rajshekar, "Ambedkar & His Conversion", *Dalit Sahitya Academy*, Bangalore, 1983, p.76.
9. For clear statements of M.K. Gandhi on the subject of his religious beliefs, see, C.F. Andrews, "Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas", George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1929, particularly pp. 35-42 and 354-355.
10. V.T. Rajshekar, "Hinduism, Fascism and Gandhism", *Dalit Sahitya Academy*, Bangalore, 1985, p.56.
11. Bipan Chandra, "India's Struggle For Independence 1857-1947", Penguin Books, 1989, p.418.
12. A Punjabi, "Confederacy Of India", Nawab Sir Muhammad Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot, Lahore, 1939, p.36.
13. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *Orient Longmans*, Bombay, February 1959, see pp. 21, 136-137, 155, 161-162, 174, 197, 198, 211 and 215.
14. A Punjabi, op. cit., p.38.
15. "Struggle For Freedom in Sikh Shrines", (ed. Ganda Singh), Sikh Ithas Research Board, Amritsar, (year of publication not mentioned), p. 14.
16. "My dear Lord Rippon,

I think it would be politically dangerous to allow the management of the Sikh temples to fall into the hands of a Committee emancipated from Govt. control; and I trust your Excellency will assist to pass such orders in the case as will enable to continue the system which has worked out successfully for more than thirty years.

Believe me,

Yours Sincerely,

R.E. Egerton.

Simla, 8th Aug., 1881.

Lieut. Governor, Punjab."

See, Narain Singh, "Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar", Singh Brothers, Amritsar, January 1988, p.31 for the above letter.

17. Ibid., see pp. 86, 108, 114-116, 119, 120-129, 160.
18. Ganda Singh, "Some Confidential Papers of The Akali Movement", Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1965, p. 255.
19. Narain Singh, "Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar", (Pbi.), Singh Brothers,
Amritsar, 1988, pp.116-117.
20. Sohan Singh Josh, "Akali Morchian Da Itihas", 2nd. Edn. (Pbi.), Arsi Publishers, Delhi, 1977. September 16, 1995, pp. 84-85.
21. Ganda Singh, op. cit., p. 55. It is perhaps a part of the solution to appreciate the idea of a spurious struggle for independence. The history of India's struggle for independence certainly requires a more realistic interpretation.
22. Ibid., p. 54.
23. Ibid., p. 57.
24. Sangat Singh, "The Sikhs in History", Published by the Author, New York, 1995, p.146.
25. For the text of the statement see Mohinder Singh, "The Akali Movement", The Macmillian Company Of India Limited, Delhi, 1978, pp. 206- 212. Tejwant S.Gill, loc. cit..
26. Cf. Tejwant S. Gill, "Jawaharlal Nehru And The Punjab", a paper presented at the ICH Seminar on Contemporary History Of The Punjab (February 27 - March 01, 1995) organised by the Institute of Punjab Studies, Chandigarh. It is a very perceptive paper but the author is found to be constantly shying away from the conclusions which emerge. Prof. Indu Banga very kindly gave me a copy of the original paper.

27. Ajit Singh Sarhadi, "Punjabi Suba", U.C. Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1970, p.187.
28. R. Coupland, "Indian Politics 1936-1942", Oxford University Press, 1944, p.48.
29. See Charan Singh's interview, "Surya India", July 1984, New Delhi, p.13.
30. Kapur Singh's speech in the Lok Sabha on the Punjab Reorganization Bill 1966, see "*Sachi Sakhi*", op. cit., p.242.
31. Sangat Singh, op. cit, p. 231.
32. Ibid., p. 237, quoting Patel to Nehru, August 28, 1949, SPC Vol. 8, pp. 334-338.

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SIKH IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF PUNJAB ISSUE

James Massey

The present status of Sikhs needs a careful look by those who are interested in its development in the future. This subject includes a number of areas connected with the Sikh faith. One such area is the present state of the Sikh faith which actually includes studies of various aspects of the life of the Sikh community. One of the issues which needs a serious thought is the 'Punjab Issue', which of course is related to the life of every Punjabi belonging to different faiths and ideologies, but as it stands today, it has a special relationship with the Sikhs. Therefore, the subject, 'Sikh Identity in the Context of Punjab Issue' being dealt with in this paper, is also related to the whole question of 'Religious Pluralism', which in different forms is under consideration continually during the post-independence era in the Indian history. For some, it has become a threat to the very fabric of the existence of our Indian pluralistic society. But for others, it is a struggle for maintaining or establishing one's own religious identity in a pluralistic society. After all, pluralism is basically a concept, which upholds the principle of toleration of diversities, such as differences of opinion, views, beliefs and attitudes. The Punjab issue has to be seen in the light of this understanding of 'religious pluralism'. Because, in our country some are working towards building a totalitarian society by introducing not only dominant language, but also "a majority religion and monolithic set of norms." (Kaur 1991, p.187). The Punjab issue in this paper is examined from the angle of the latter view.

The Punjab issue is one of the most important issues our country is faced with. One can find its mention almost every day in all types of media at the national level. Based upon what the media tell us, some of us have offered very simplistic explanation. As a result, some of them start condemning a particular community, showing contempt toward its members. Such approaches to an issue like Punjab only help to aggravate the problem. The Punjab issue, actually is a question of

Sikh identity. Behind this issue, there are a number of factors, religious, social, political and economic. All these factors have a long history behind them, which began with the birth of the founderguru, Guru Nanak Dev on 15th April, 1469. Therefore, to deal with this centuries old question, one brief paper is not sufficient. Because, it needs perhaps volumes of works (some have already been written, of which a few are referred to in this paper). Anyhow, in order to formulate our own opinion, a brief discussion on the historical development of the issue of Punjab is made here under the following heads:

- I. Early Period
- II. British Period
- III. Post-independence Period
- IV. Comments

I. EARLY PERIOD

Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikh religion, was born on 15th April, 1469, in a village named Nankana Sahib, which is about 65 kilometres from Lahore (now in Pakistan). As a young boy, he studied both under a Hindu and a Muslim teacher. He was always interested to spend time with religious saints belonging to different religious groups. But nobody could satisfy his inner quest. So one day, he left his home. He prayed and meditated. He thought about the bitter differences of Hindus and Muslims. After many years of experience, he was led to a very radical belief; which he stated in a simple statement: "There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman". After this enriching experience he took two companions, one Muslim named Mardana, and the other a farmer (*Jat*) Hindu called Bala. He called them '*bhai*' brother. Mardana was a musician. Guru Nanak Dev used to compose his messages which Mardana set to music, and then they would sing. Guru Nanak Dev basically used the local language. His simple teachings appealed to Punjabi villagers. Within a few years, Guru Nanak Dev had many disciples.

There were nine other gurus after Guru Nanak Dev. He appointed one of his disciples named Lehna as his successor. Lehna's name was changed to Angad which means 'limb'. This indicated that he was the extension of the former Guru. Each guru further strengthened the Sikh movement started by Guru Nanak Dev, and also made specific contribution to the growth of the Sikh religion, which

later on helped in establishing a distinct Sikh identity. The second guru, Guru Angad Dev (1539-1552 A.D.) popularized the Gurmukhi script, which helped the development of the Punjabi language. This was the script which was used later on for the writing of the Sikh Scripture. It was different from Devnagri script, which was used to write Sanskrit, the language of the priestly class of Hindus, and currently is being used to write Hindi also.

Guru Angad Dev appointed as his successor, one of his disciples named Amar Das. Guru Amar Das served as guru for twenty-two years (1552-1574). By the time of Guru Amar Das, the Sikh movement had spread all over the rural Punjab. Particularly, the farmers of Punjab accepted the Guru's religion. Now as the Sikh religion was spreading, a proper organisation was needed. In order to fulfil this need, Guru Amar Das organised 22 centres and appointed lay preachers to take care of each centre. He also commissioned 146 well trained missionaries, out of which 94 were men and 52 were women. (Trilochan Singh 1972, page 11). This was indeed a bold step on the part of Guru Amar Das, particularly giving equal status to women with men. Guru Amar Das also made popular the institution of *langar* or free kitchen in gurdwaras (Sikh temples) where people of all castes had to share common meals. He also founded a Sikh centre of pilgrimage at Goindwal on the bank of the river Beas in Punjab. He introduced forms of Sikh marriage ceremony and Sikh festivals, which were different from the Hindus'. These steps added to a separate Sikh identity.

After Guru Amar Das, the fourth guru, Guru Ram Das's main contribution was laying the foundation of the Sikh holy city of Ramdasapur, which later on came to be known as Amritsar. The fifth guru, Guru Arjun Dev (1581-1606) was born in 1563 at Goindwal. He was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das. He was a great builder. He built the famous Golden Temple in Amritsar, which is now the main pilgrimage place for the Sikhs. The foundation of this great temple was laid down by a Muslim saint. Besides being a good builder, Guru Arjun Dev was a born poet and scholar. His greatest work was the compilation of the Adi Granth (Sikh Scripture) in 1604. It includes the writings of the first four gurus along with his own. But, he also included therein the writings of both Hindu and Muslim saints. The compilation of Adi Granth was a major step for the future of Sikh religion. This holy

scripture for the Sikhs is the base for all religious and other matters. By Guru Arjun Dev's time, the Sikh community had grown numerically and become stronger. The Muslim Emperor Jahangir did not like this. So, he got the Guru arrested and tortured him to death in Lahore in 1606. Thus, Guru Arjun Dev became the first and the most important martyr in Sikh history.

After Guru Arjun Dev's death, his son Hargobind became the Guru in 1606, and he was guru till 1645. During his time as guru, a turning point in Sikh history came. Guru Arjun Dev's execution by a Muslim Emperor and their growing hostility towards the Sikh movement forced Guru Hargobind to prepare his followers to defend themselves by military means. In fact, Guru Arjun Dev had already prepared him for this and asked Bhai Budha to train Hargobind as a saint-soldier. So, after becoming the Guru, to give lead to his followers, he himself wore two swords, a symbol of spiritual (*piri*) and temporal (*miri*) power. He also combined the symbols of service, the *deg* (the cauldron to serve to the needy) and *tegh* (the sword to defend the helpless). This he asked his followers to adopt as their life principle.

The seventh guru, Guru Har Rai, was guru from 1645 till 1661. He further developed a fighting force of 2,200 horsemen, and also organised the missionary work outside Punjab. The eighth guru, Guru Har Krishan, was only five years old, when he became guru. He went to Delhi in response to the summons of Emperor Aurangzeb, where he contracted small-pox and died in 1664. His last words were: "*Baba Bakale*" which meant that his successor was to be found at that place in Punjab.

The ninth guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind, who became guru in 1664, and was a zealous preacher. Guru Tegh Bahadur was a great champion of religious freedom. To get freedom of worship for the Hindu Brahmins, he incurred the wrath of the Muslim Emperor Aurangzeb, who asked the Guru either to accept Islam or to face death. The Guru refused, for which he was beheaded on November 11, 1675 in Delhi.

After his father's sacrificial death, Gobind Singh (1666-1708) became guru. He was only ten years old, so he spent some years in studying Persian, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Hindi and in learning the art of war.

At last, came the greatest day of Sikh history. At the time of Baisakhi festival in March 1699 A.D., the Guru assembled his followers at Anandpur Sahib, and selected in a dramatic manner 'five beloved ones' known as *Panj Piyaras*. The Guru baptized these five by administering them *amrit* (sugar water stirred with a double-edged sword), and out of the same bowl in turn the Guru was baptized by them. After the baptism the Guru declared the five beloved ones as the Khalsa meaning 'pure ones', and gave them new names with suffix '*Singh*', meaning lion, and the female as '*Kaur*' which means princess. The Guru also made them take an oath to observe and wear the five K's: *Kesh* (hair), *Kangha* (comb), *Kara* (steel bangle), *Kachha* (shorts), and *Kirpan* (sword). After the baptism, the Guru greeted the five beloved ones with these words "*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh*", which means "Khalsas are the people of God; Victory be to God." Thus, the Khalsa brotherhood was founded. We must remember, however, that the Guru himself never waged a battle. He always fought to protect his followers. While writing to Emperor Aurangzeb, he wrote in his Epistle of Victory known as the *Zafarnama*: "Helplessly, as a last resort, I came forward and took arms. When all other means have failed, it is lawful to resort to the sword." (21:22)

After this, Guru Gobind Singh gave the final form to the Sikh religion. He had already transferred the physical leadership of the Sikh movement, to the representatives of the community, elected or selected on the basis of their devotion to the Guru's teachings. Along with this, before his death, he also announced that he would have no human successor. Instead, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (the Adi Granth) will be the only Guru of the Sikhs. In the Adi Granth, he added 116 hymns written by his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, and it is known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In this way the process which had begun about two hundred years before, was now complete, with which the Sikh identity also got established.

It is true that the three factors, a regular and recognised succession, the permanent form of teachings of the Gurus and other saints (Sri Guru Granth Sahib), and the founding of the Khalsa were major steps towards building a separate distinct Sikh identity. But, at the same time, a number of the followers of Guru Nanak known as *Nanak-panthis*, did not accept the baptism of Guru Gobind Singh, and,

therefore, they did not become *keshdhari* (having hair), and continued to be *sahajdhari* Sikhs (without hair).

II. BRITISH PERIOD

According to Pranay Gupte: "The genesis of the Sikh-Hindu polarization of the 1980s dates back to the last century, when India's British rulers successfully sowed the seed of mutual suspicion among members of the two communities." (Gupte, 1989, p. 128). As it is clear from the discussion in the last section of this paper, historical roots for the struggle for a separate identity of Sikhs goes much earlier than the British period. Because, if seen carefully, almost all the ten Sikh Gurus have contributed in the development of the future Sikh identity. Therefore, we agree with Pranay Gupte's views, only because it is certainly true that the issue of separate Sikh identity remained clear and sharp during the British period, for which many factors are responsible. Here, we will refer only to three such factors, which include i) Policy of Census, ii) Policy of Recruitment in the army, and iii) Gurdwara Reform Movement.

POLICY OF CENSUS: As we know, it was the British who introduced the census system, which according to some historians, gave birth to 'the politics of numbers', and also helped a number of communities in India in establishing their identities. (Webster 1992, pages 77, 78). The census affected the Sikh community also. For example, the first census of the Punjab took place in 1855. At that time, except in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Lahore and Gujranwala (where Sikhs were enumerated separately), at all other places Sikhs and Hindus were counted together. By the time of the next census in 1868, the number of Sikhs increased substantially (from 181,172 to 511,064). In the 1881 census, the Sikhs were enumerated separately from Hindus in Punjab. But, because of the Hindu influence, the Sikh *Dalit* converts were treated as Hindus, and in those days they were also not even permitted to enter some gurdwaras. The census also revealed how much the Christian missionaries' work was effective, specially in increasing the number of Christians from *Dalit* background. The number of Christians in 1881 was 3,796; in 1891 was 19,547; in 1901 was 37,980; in 1911 as 163,994, and in 1921 was 315, 931. By that time, the educated section of Sikhs was deeply distressed with the ongoing Sikh social and religious practices. Some even became Christians. A similar

threat the Sikhs faced from the *Arya Samaj*, which was founded at Rajkot in Gujarat in 1875, and in 1883 it was established in Punjab. The *Arya Samaj*, while facing a challenge from Christians, not only started a reform among Hindus, but also started a practice of *Shuddhikaran* (a ritual of purification). Through this practice, they not only attempted to bring back *Dalit* Christians to the Hindu fold, they also, in the month of August 1896, re-converted *Dalit* Sikhs to Hinduism. (Kapur 1986, pages 9, 12-14 and 22).

About this new situation created by the census policy and the efforts of the Christian and Hindu enthusiasts, Kapur has pointed out; "The reform of behavioural Sikhism to renew its vitality, the need to safeguard it from Christian inroads, and the preservation of a distinct Sikh identity, were for many of these Sikhs, no longer a mere intellectual concern, they had become a practical necessity." (Kapur 1986, page 15).*

RECRUITMENT POLICY: After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Punjab was annexed by the British in 1849. But in the second Anglo-Sikh war (1848-9), the Britishers also recognised the Sikh's bravery with which they could fight their opponents. The Sikhs, therefore, were encouraged by the British rulers. As a result, the Sikhs, at the time of 1857 mutiny, fought along with the Britishers against the other Indians, who had helped the former in the Anglo-Sikh wars.

Because of the nature of the above relationship, according to Kapur: "The army had from the outset defined Sikh to mean *keshdhari* Sikhs and had actively encouraged the maintenance of the *keshdhari*'s separate identity" (Kapur 1986, page 24). Because of such actions of the Britishers, followers of the Gurus remained distinct from Hindus.

GURDWARA'REFORM MOVEMENT: By the time of the British period, a number of Hindu practices, including the worship of gods and goddesses, and even the practice of caste system, had infiltrated among Sikhs. The advantage of this situation was taken by Christian missionaries, and later by the members of *Arya Samaj*. This situation gave birth to a society in 1873, known as *Singh Sabha*. Along with other objectives, this society's main aim was to arouse love of their religion among Sikhs and "To propagate the true Sikh religion

* The Sikh response to the situation was 'revival' of pristine Sikh practices, and not 'reform'.

everywhere". In the beginning, these *Sabhas* were started as independent organs in different cities such as Amritsar (1873), Lahore (1879), and by 1899 there were 121 *Singh Sabhas* functioning all over the Punjab. The members of these *Sabhas* even started *Shuddhi Sabha* like *Arya Samajis*, in order to bring converts from other religions back to the Sikh fold. Such efforts both sides started: "Bitter debate between Aryas and Hindus over the demarcation of communal boundaries, only added fuel to the passion with which Sikhs advocated the distinctiveness of Sikh identity. Indeed, within a few years, the Sikhs who espoused the cause of a separate Sikh identity, the Tat, or true Khalsa, as they came to be called, had become the dominant group among active *Singh Sabhaites*". (Kapur 1986, page 22).

Meanwhile, the number of *Singh Sabhas* increased, as also their related activities. Therefore, to co-ordinate all these activities, an organisation called Chief Khalsa Diwan was formed in 1902.

One of the main steps undertaken by the *Singh Sabha* was in the area of social and religious reform, which was connected with the management of Sikh gurdwaras. During the rule of the Muslim emperors in Delhi, the Sikh community had to face bitter persecution, and its members were forced to go into exile. During that period the management of the gurdwaras passed into the hands of the *Udasi* sect founded by Guru Nanak Dev's eldest son, Sri Chand. Most members of this sect were *sahajdhari* Sikhs, who knew the Sikh scripture well, but in many ways, were practising Hindus also. But, they continued to serve as *granthis* and *mahants* in Sikh gurdwaras. Because of the large income from the offerings in the gurdwaras, these *mahants* became corrupt. Therefore, reforms in the management of gurdwaras became a necessity for Sikhs.

At the same time, Sikhs had also become aware of their political identity and separate rights. They demanded special representation, which, in principle, was accepted by the Montagu Chelmsford in 1918. In order to deal with the political issues related to Sikhs, they founded the Central Sikh League on 30th December, 1919. Through the establishment of the Central Sikh League, Tat Khalsa started working towards Khalsa nationalism.

In 1920, the militant members re-named the Gurdwara Committee as Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC),

which later instituted an organization known as Shiromani Akali Dal. This new body was supposed to implement all the programmes of the SGPC.

But, the management of gurdwaras continued to be in the hands of the *mahants* and *pujaris*. The organised Akali Dal now became a big threat to the authority of these *mahants*. On the other hand, the *mahants* refused to recognise the authority of the SGPC. Instead, they started another organisation known as Udasi Mahamandal, in order to protect their rights. But, by various ways, Akalis continued to work for taking over the gurdwara management. Some of the gurdwaras were taken over by force.

The biggest threat was faced by the management of Nankana Sahib in Lahore district, which was the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev. Its *mahant*, Narain Das, first approached the British government for protection, but then he took the whole matter in his own hands. He hired *gundas*, and when in February 1921, an Akali *Jatha* went to take over the gurdwara, Narain Das's men opened fire on the *Jatha* and killed 130 men. These men were hacked into pieces and some were even burnt. This incident forced the government to intervene in the management of the gurdwara. Narain Das and seven other men were arrested and were given life imprisonment.

Finally, a draft bill, the Sikh Gurdwara and Shrine Bill of 1925 was prepared. According to Rajiv Kapur: "On the surface, the bill seemed an equitable solution to the controversy over gurdwara management. But, the Punjab government had made a crucial concession in the bill, which laid down that a person would or would not be deemed to be a Sikh depending on whether or not he makes a declaration stating: 'I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in the Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the Ten Gurus and that I have no other religion'". (Kapur 1986, page 187). With this declaration no more *sahajdhari* Sikhs could claim they are Hindu as well as Sikh, because the above bill was passed in 1925 as an Act.

Meanwhile, till the independence, a number of other developments took place, which led the country to freedom. But, at the time of the creation of Pakistan through Tara Singh, an idea of a separate Sikh State, Sikhistan or Khalistan, was officially adopted by the Akali Dal in March 1946. (Kapur 1986, pages 206-7).

III. POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

This period from 1947 till date is known to all, particularly to us Indians. During this period also, identity struggle among different religious communities has continued. Here, for our discussion, only a brief reference to some of the incidents and documents is made.

The first document which created a post-independence controversy with regard to the identity among various religious communities, was the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 (known also as the 1950 Presidential Order), which to begin with recognised the identity of *Dalit* Hindus (Scheduled Castes). One interpretation, particularly from Bhartiya Janta Party is that "under the Constitution, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains were classified as Hindus". (Massey 1994, pages 38-40). But, this was not accepted by the Sikh community, and they struggled on behalf of the Sikh *Dalits*, demanding that they should be recognised as a separate group as "Sikh" and this demand of theirs was accepted in 1956 and the Presidential Order was amended by the Parliament by adding in it "Hindu and Sikh." (Galantar 1984, page 144).

Concerning the separate or autonomous Sikh state, according to some well known scholars, the idea of a separate nation "Started taking shape with Nehru's announcement that new Indian states would be created along linguistic lines". (Gupte 1989, pages 131). According to this commitment of Nehru, thirteen out of India's fifteen major language-based states were created, but Punjab was ignored. Therefore, in April 1960 the Akali Dal launched a movement for 'Punjabi Suba'. This demand was accepted in 1966, and a separate state of Punjab was created by dividing the earlier Punjab into three states: Haryana in which 5 percent Sikhs lived, Himachal Pradesh where 2 percent Sikhs lived and the present Punjab where about 52 percent Sikhs lived. (Gupte 1989, pages 131-32).

Struggle for greater autonomy continued along with some other demands, both religious and political. For example, the famous 'Political Goal Resolution' of Anandpur Sahib, which was adopted by the Working Committee of the Akali Dal on October 16-17, 1973, has spelt out a number of demands, which include that some of the Punjabi-speaking areas, left out of Punjab, should be given back to Punjab, that the Indian Constitution should be recast on real federal principles, and that the Centre's powers should be restricted to defence, foreign

relations, currency and general communication, only. The ideology and the objectives of the Akali Dal were stated in the preamble of the Resolution as follows: "The political goal of the Panth, without doubt, is enshrined in the commandments of the 10th Lord, in the pages of Sikh history and in the very heart of the Khalsa Panth, the ultimate objective of which is the pre-eminences of the Khalsa". (Jaffar 1987, page 465).

The Ludhiana Resolution which was adopted by All India Akali Conference in its meeting held on October 28 and 29, 1978 adopted a Resolution in "the light of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution", which included the following six demands:

- a) Chandigarh, originally raised as a capital for Punjab should be handed over to Punjab.
- b) The long-standing demand of the Shiromani Akali Dal for the merger with Punjab of the Punjabi-speaking areas to be identified by linguistic experts with the village as a unit should be conceded.
- c) The control of canal headworks should be vested in Punjab and, if need be, the Reorganisation Act should be amended.
- d) The arbitrary and unjust award given by Mrs. Indira Gandhi during emergency on the distribution of Ravi-Beas waters, should be revised on the universally accepted forms and principles, and justice should be done to Punjab.
- e) Keeping in view the special aptitude and martial qualities of the Sikhs, the present ratio of their strength in the army should be maintained.
- f) The excesses being committed on the settlers in the Terai region of U.P. in the name of land reforms should be stopped by making suitable amendments to the ceiling law on the basis of Central guidelines. (Jaffar 1987. pages 668-70).

Then came the 11 point agreement between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and the Akali Dal Chief Harchand Singh Longowal, which was signed on 24th July, 1985 regarding the Punjab problem. Part of this agreement is reproduced here, which deals with the main issues related to the Punjab problem:

7. Territorial Claims

- 7.1 The Capital Project Area of Chandigarh will go to Punjab. Some adjoining areas which were previously part of Hindi or the Punjabi regions were included in the Union Territory. With the Capital region going to Punjab, the areas which were added to the Union Territory from the Punjabi regions of the erstwhile state of Punjab will be transferred to Punjab and those from Hindi region to Haryana. The entire Sukhna lake will be kept as part of the Chandigarh, and will thus go to Punjab.
- 7.2 It had always been maintained by Smt. Indira Gandhi that when Chandigarh is to go to Punjab, some Hindi-speaking territories in Punjab will go to Haryana. A commission will be constituted to determine the specific Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab, which should go to Haryana, in lieu of Chandigarh.

The principle of contiguity and linguistic affinity, with a village as a unit, will be the basis of such determination. The commission will be required to give its findings by 31st December, 1985, and these will be binding on both sides. The work of the commission will be limited to this aspect, and will be distinct from the general boundary claims which the other commission referred to in para 7.4 will handle.

- 7.3 The actual transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, and areas in lieu thereof to Haryana, will take place simultaneously on 26th January, 1986.
- 7.4 There are other claims and counter-claims for readjustment of the existing Punjab-Haryana boundaries. The Government will appoint another commission to consider these matters and give its findings. Such findings will be binding on the concerned states. These terms of reference will be based on a village as a unit, linguistic affinity and contiguity.
8. Centre State Relations
- 8.1 Shiromani Akali Dal states that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is entirely within the frame-work of the Indian Constitution; that it attempts to define the concept of Centre-State relations in a manner which may bring out the true federal character of our Unitary Constitution; and that the purpose of the Resolution is to provide greater autonomy to the State with a view to strengthening

the unity and integrity of the country, since unity in diversity forms the corner-stone of our national entity.

8.2 In view of the above, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in so far as it deals with Centre-State relations, stands referred to the Sarkaria Commission.

9. Sharing of River Waters.

9.1 The farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan will continue to get water, not less than what they are using from the Ravi-Beas system as on 01-07-1985. Waters used for consumptive purposes will also remain unaffected. Quantum of usage claimed shall be verified by the Tribunal referred to in para 9.2 below.

9.2 The claim of Punjab and Haryana, regarding the share in their remaining waters, will be referred for adjudication to a Tribunal to be presided over by a Supreme Court Judge. The decision of this Tribunal will be rendered

within six months, and would be binding on both parties. All legal and constitutional steps required in this respect will be taken expeditiously.

9.3 The construction of the SYL canal shall continue. The canal shall be completed by 15th August, 1986. (Narang 1986, pages 208-11).

The final quotes I would like to give here, is from the report published by the "Indian Express" on formation of the new united Akali Party on May 2, 1994. It says:

The formation of the new party came into being after seven days of continuous deliberations held by frontline leaders of these factions and SGPC President G.S. Tohra at *Akal Takht*, in the presence of five Sikh high priests headed by the acting head priest of *Akal Takht*, Manjit Singh, pledging to wage a struggle for a "separate area" (within India) where Sikhs can experience the glow of freedom.

The same newspaper dated May 3rd, 1994, in its editorial, titled, "Back to Mischief" gave its judgement on the above Akali unity move as follows:

"There are no two ways about the fact that so-called Amritsar Declaration is mischievous in the extreme and inimical to the

interests of the people of Punjab. Once again, there is the pretence of seeking autonomy for Punjab accompanied by rhetoric about the right to a Sikh homeland and undercurrents of religious grievance. Once again the Akalis are playing with fire.... But if the alternative is the new Shiromani Akali Dal with a one-point trouble-making programme, Punjab is better off without it.... *miri* and *piri*, the traditional Akali route to power, has been the ruin of the Akalis...."

IV. COMMENTS

The historical background of the current Punjab issue, related to the question of Sikh identity is self-explanatory. Therefore, I do not intend to offer detailed comments or analysis. But, still a few brief personal comments will be worthwhile.

The first important point which becomes clear, particularly from the discussion in the "Early Period", is that all the requirements needed for a separate identity are found in the works and teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus. The three most important events which took place during the first two centuries of Sikh history (1469-1708), require our special attention. One, the appointment of successor by the first guru, Guru Nanak Dev became the basis for the continuity of the leadership for the future. Two, the compilation of the Sikh Scripture by the fifth guru, Guru Arjun Dev, which contained the most authentic teachings of the Gurus and other Saints, became the basis of Sikh ideology to guide the everyday lives of the Sikh believers in the years to come. And three, a very important event was the founding of the Khalsa by the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, based upon a set of very distinctive rules of discipline, which provided a visible and clear cut identity for the members of the Khalsa Brotherhood. These factors based on the above three most important events of Sikh history, in the years to come, will save Sikh Religion from absorption into Hinduism. (See also Tandon 1988, pages 658-61).

The second important point which becomes clear from the discussion, particularly in the "British Period", when the identity question of the Sikh community became very crucial, is that the policies of the British rulers, specially the policy of census and recruitment in the army, were helpful in this matter. The Sikh movement during British

period ultimately culminated in the formation of various important Sikh institutions like Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC), followed by the organisation of the Akali Dal, a political arm of SGPC. Both SGPC and Akali Dal have led the Sikh masses towards establishing their separate Sikh identity.

The third important point which becomes clear, particularly from the discussion in the "Post-independence Period", is that the Sikh struggle for a separate identity is still continuing, which of course is now mixed up with a number of other concerns, religious, political, social and economic. All these ultimately point towards a separate Sikh identity. But interestingly, if one goes carefully through the text of various resolutions adopted by the Shiromani Akali Dal, at different times, including the ones referred to in our discussion, it becomes very clear that the notion of a separate state was never firmly demanded by the Akalis. On the other hand, if one goes through the language used by the government documents such as the 'White Paper on the Punjab Agitation', there one gets a very clear cut notion of separate state and other related issues, which, at some stage start appealing to some sections of people and give them the basis for their struggle.

In the discussion in the "Post-independent Period", the other point which becomes clear from the text of the agreement (which was signed by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the former President of the Akali Dal, Mr. Harchand Singh Longowal on 24th July, 1985), is the one related to the issues of territory, sharing river waters and the Central State relations, including greater autonomy to the States. Now these three issues, particularly the last one, are supposed to be the basis for solving the conflict, which if taken in the right spirit, could have been solved without creating all the serious problems, which not only the people in Punjab, but the rest of the country have had to face.

About the role of media, our discussion has just made a mention, but it is very crucial, either in aggravating or in reconciling a situation such as Punjab. If the media persons and their channels follow positive media ethics while giving their opinion or judgement on such issues, our problems will be far less. An example of Indian Express is a very good one, which has been referred to in our discussion. This is where media roles become important in dealing with an issue like

Punjab.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the end, before concluding this paper, I would like to give a quote from V.S. Naipaul's work on 'India, A Million Mutinies Now' in which he says:

"In the 130 years or so since the Mutiny — the last 90 years of the British Raj and the first 40 years of independence begin increasingly to appear as part of the same historical period — the idea of freedom has gone, everywhere in India. Independence was worked for by people more or less at the top: the freedom it brought has worked its way down. People everywhere have ideas now of who they are and what they owe themselves. The process quickened with economic development that came after independence; what was hidden in 1962, or not easy to see, what perhaps was only in a state of becoming, has become clearer. The liberation of spirit that has come to India could not come as release alone. In India, with its layer below layer of distress and cruelty, it had to come as disturbance. It had to come as rage and revolt. India was now a country of a million little mutinies." (Naipaul 1990, page 517).

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Section III
SIKH INSTITUTIONS

SIKH INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION

Narindar Singh

The teachings of Guru Nanak elaborated and institutionalized by the succeeding Gurus represent the theology that shaped the Sikh identity. Guru Angad invented the Gurmukhi (script for writing Punjabi) and Guru Arjun compiled Adi Granth (the Sikh scripture). The two steps went a long way in establishing the separate entity of the Sikhs. Over a period of time, the Gurus developed Sikh institutions which enabled the followers of the faith to practice tenets of a successful spiritual life. With major ingredients of a distinct organization (Sikh Panth), Sikh institutions, separate religious centres, a separate script and scripture of their own, they became an entirely separate church and a new society. The source of Sikh teachings is Guru Granth Sahib. Creation is perceived as grounded in the Divine and informed by a spiritual purpose.

Sikhism teaches truthful living and emphasis is laid on selfless service, compassion, tolerance, love, contentment, humility, equality, humbleness, and welfare for all. The religion has played an important role in the lives of the followers of the faith for the past 500 years of Sikh history. They have made supreme sacrifices in the defence of their faith. Sikh institutions have been instrumental in moulding the Sikh's personality towards spiritual uplift through *sewa* (selfless service), harness talents and practise tenets of the faith. The Sikhs have unflinching faith in the Creator. There is the presence of a humanitarian and compassionate attitude towards all humanity. It heavily weighs against cruelty and injustice. It aims at the establishment of a just society. The goal of a Sikh is not only the spiritual upliftment of the individual, but the advancement of all humanity.

Sikhs are essentially peace loving and have offered martyrdoms as attested by Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur. They have learnt to preserve the good and the true. *Sewa* has a special orientation in Sikh teachings that brings completion and fulfilment to the spiritual life. In order to bring divine knowledge and spiritual experience and

ethical thought to the simple folks of Punjab, the Gurus selected the native Punjabi language as the medium of expression. The Gurus commended a householder's life and the individual to remain engaged in beneficent and humanitarian activity. One should keep one's mind absorbed in contemplation and devotion.

Kirtan (devotional singing) in *sangat* (congregation) produces a spiritual atmosphere which brings the participants in holy communion. In the midst of holy company, the disciple learns selfless service of the community. Guru Amar Das established social equality by seating the high and low together in the *sangat* and *langar* (free kitchen). The association with *sadh-sangat* (holy congregation) is vital to the spiritual growth of a Sikh. One is instructed in the Lord's virtues, that helps the individual to develop such virtues himself. The association enables one to overcome worldly temptations. A gurdwara (Sikh church) is the home of the Guru (God), that is the place where Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) is installed. It is a public place and anyone who wishes to enter at anytime is welcome. It is a school for learning spiritual wisdom where all persons are considered equal. Lodging for travellers and *langar* is provided for anyone who wants, and it serves as a centre for religious, social, charitable, and educational work.

Apart from religious service, a gurdwara is used for multi-community activities which include social and political events. Out of town visitors can stay for a few days. It provides a place for serving *langar* after the function. Gurdwara services include *kirtan* and *katha* (sermons). It provides facilities for teaching and practice of music for Sikh children.

Langar provides avenues for *sewa*. In fact, it is real Sikhism at work, both in theory and practice. *Pangat* (queue) provides the basic discipline of sitting in *langar*. It became not only a means of social reform but was considered a significant step in the eradication of the caste system, which resulted in the integration of untouchables and under-privileged. *Takhts* provide the centres of religious authority. Matters of interest affecting the entire Panth are decided at Akal Takht.

The institution of *amrit* (Sikh initiation) of Guru Gobind Singh is the signing of covenants with *Akal Purakh*. It is a contract, an

agreement that the *amritdhari* (initiated Sikh) shall uphold Sikh values as laid down by the Sikh Gurus. It involves living the higher path of ethical and spiritual conduct. Selfless and virtuous conduct is urged. Moral living is stressed, since, the ideal of life is to carry out the Will of God. Initiation of *amrit* destroys divisiveness of caste, class and profession. *Amrit* is the saint-soldier concept of Guru Gobind Singh — an individual who combines moral and physical discipline, and is in tune with the Supreme Being. It is Guru Nanak's concept of *sachiarā* (the enlightened emancipated individual) simultaneously invested with divine qualities. Guru Gobind Singh laid down a *rehat* (code of conduct) of *panj kakkas* (five Sikh symbols) for the Khalsa. Each symbol is either related to *miri* or *piri*, *shakti* (power) or *bhakti* (devotion). *Kes* (unshorn hair) stands for *piri*, as it is an ancient symbol of spirituality. The *kangha* (comb) is a symbol of *piri*, as cleanliness is next to godliness. *Kachha* (underpants) are a symbol of *piri*, of self-control or moral restraint and chasteness. The *kara* (steel bangle) is a symbol of *piri*, of a link with God and a constant reminder of God's presence. The *kirpan* (sword) is a symbol of *miri*. It stands for fearlessness and *dharam yudh-ka-chau* (enthusiasm to fight in the cause of righteousness).

Miri and *piri* or *bhakti* and *shakti* signifies the saint-soldier concept, implying that the means to achieve an objective should be as noble as the end. *Miri* stands for leadership/rulership, and it is intended to establish a just state where all men are equal. Force should be used only as a last resort when all peaceful means have failed. The use of force to protect religion was an exercise of self-defence. *Degh* and *Tegh* are symbols of *piri* and *miri*. *Miri* and *piri* could be equated with *jugat* (wisdom) and *jot* (divine light). *Jot* is eternal, while *jugat* can be modified.

The institution of *gurmatta* (resolution taken in the presence of the Guru) provide a forum for taking significant decisions affecting the Panth concerning a particular situation that may require clarification of fundamental principles of the faith according to *rehat maryada* (Sikh code of conduct). *Gurmattas* are binding on all Sikhs. *Gurmatta* is the symbol and form of supreme authority of the will of the people. It has the community's sanction behind it. *Manjis* were areas of jurisdiction for the purpose of preaching the faith. Devoted Sikhs of high calibre were appointed to carry out the missionary work.

The following are the Sikh institutions: *Sangat*; *sadh-sangat*; *gurdwara*; *langar*; *pangat*; *takhts*; *amrit*; *gurmatta*; *miri* and *piri*; and *manji* system. *Gurmatta* introduced the birth of the Khalsa.

SANGAT

The *sangat* is an assembly of men, women and children, who recite or listen to the recitation of the Gurus' hymns in praise of God. The *sangat* gathers in a *dharamsala* (place for the practice of *dhama*), a *gurdwara*, or any other place where the Gurus' *bani* (hymn) is sung in profound devotion. The *kirtan* proceeds to create a sweet rhythm among the singers and listeners, a spiritual atmosphere which brings them into a holy communion. Such a congregation of Sikhs works in a corporate manner for overall development of the community. The *sangat* should concentrate on God and the meaning of the hymns. The minds of the *sangat* should be free from worldly affairs. Every Sikh is expected to attend the *sangat*. Everyone sits together on the floor, anywhere they like, as equals.

Sikhs believe that the Guru lives in the *sangat*. In the midst of holy company, the disciple learns the service of the community. In association with the *sangat*, the individual loses his sense of selfishness and learns to work in a democratic set up. There are no priests or clerical orders in Sikh religion, and as such all disciples are equal. They pray and eat together. They offer voluntary service for community development. During the Guru's times, *sangats* built rest-houses, dug wells for the benefit of the masses, and looked after the needs of the poor and the disabled. It was their lead in voluntary social work, which attracted many people to Sikhism. They established *dharamsalas*. Such hospices catered to the needs of visitors, pilgrims, and the homeless.

With the creation of the Khalsa brotherhood, the *sangat* became equal to the status of the Guru. The Tenth Guru affirmed the supremacy of the Khalsa, and even obeyed them. Ultimate power and privilege rested in them. In a tribute to the contribution and achievement of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh declared: "It is through the actions of the Khalsa that I have won all my victories. It is through their aid that I have attained such eminence, otherwise, there are millions of unknown mortals like me." (DG, 716).

SADH-SANGAT

The concept of *sadh-sangat* is pivotal to the spiritual growth of a Sikh. It implies association with the virtuous and the holy. According to Guru Nanak: "The holy congregation is an assembly where nothing but the Name of the Lord is recited." He further explains: "Such is the nature of the truly holy, that they, like the scented sandal-wood, impart their fragrance to all around them." In the company of spiritual people, the individual learns the way of true living. "The relish of God's Name is obtained in the holy congregation." Man finds the inspiration of the Lord in the company of pious people. Guru Ram Das calls *sadh-sangat*: "a school where one is instructed in the Lord's virtues." Guru Arjun says: "In the company of the saints, man's sins are washed off." Bhai Gurdas compares *satsang* (congregation of pious Sikhs) to a river, which takes one to the ocean (merger with the Lord). Guru Nanak affirms that holy company is essential for overcoming worldly temptations, and that their company transforms the nature of man. By and by, the neophyte absorbs the virtues of the guild of saints.

GURDWARA

The place where Guru Granth Sahib is installed and the *sangat* sits and prays is called gurdwara — the abode of the Guru. Generally, the congregation offers prayers or performs *kirtan* every morning and evening in the gurdwara. *Gurpurbs* (Sikh festivals commemorating the births and martyrdoms or special events in the lives of the Gurus), and ceremonies are held in the gurdwaras at appropriate times. The exposition of the scripture called *katha*, and the singing of hymns known as *kirtan*, are essential parts of Sikh worship in the gurdwara. Guru Gobind Singh freed the Sikhs from the snares and baits of so-called gurus and self-appointed religious preceptors, and linked Sikhs directly with the *Shabadguru*. When the Sikh's mind goes deep into the significance of the Holy Word, the individual attains serenity and equipoise. This enables the individual to keep a cool head and a sense of detachment and purity in the midst of the impurities of the world. The Guru Granth Sahib occupies the central place in the gurdwara. The Sikhs draw inspiration from its message, and the congregation prays for the gift of *Naam*.

For a religion, scriptures and temples are essential. A religion without one or the other becomes extinct. According to Guru Gobind

Singh, religion or spiritual values cannot be sustained without temporal authority. In the beginning, Guru Nanak's congregations were held in a *dharamsala* where his followers flocked to listen to the Guru's hymns. During the period of the first four Gurus, the Sikh temple was called a *dharamsala*. Guru Arjun named it a *harimandar*, and Guru Hargobind called it a *gurdwara*.

With the passage of time, the *gurdwara* became the forum for discussion and resolution of important problems facing the Sikh community. Suitable punishment or penances are awarded for infringements of the Sikh code of conduct. When such infringements consisted of minor offences called *tankhah*, which is a euphemism for a salary or reward, the offender stands before the congregation, and admits his mistake and offers to make amends as directed by the *sangat*. Then, the congregation refers the matter to the *panj piaras* (five Sikhs selected by the *sangat*) who deliberate and take a decision. They convey the decision to the *sangat* which confirms it by a shout of *Bolay so nihal, Sat Sri Akal* — Who says this shall be blessed, Truth is Timeless. The punishment, being the decision of the *sangat*, is accepted by the Sikh without hesitation, protest, or grudge.

LANGAR

The *langar* or free kitchen, which is a part of Sikh temples, is a unique institution of the Sikhs. Man lives by bread, but not by bread alone. The Gurus combined worship and bread. The *gurdwara* is a temple of bread as well as of worship and prayer.

The *langar* was not only a means of social reform, but also a revolutionary step against the caste system. It demolished social and professional barriers. *Langar* was a means of social cohesion and integration. It was a step towards improving the lot of the untouchables and for better treatment of the poor and the underprivileged. It was a practical lesson in equality and a symbol of dignity of the common man.

Moreover, *langar* provided avenues for *sewa*, through the collection of fuel and rations, cleaning of grains, cutting of vegetables, cooking of food, distribution of meals, serving of water, washing of utensils and dishes, and the cleaning of dining halls. It is a practical demonstration of hospitality and love of human beings, and also a fulfilment of the Sikh's obligation to *wand chhakna* (to share his food with others). The Sikh says in his prayer: "Food and water belong to

God, and desire to serve the people gives pleasure to the Sikh". Guru Nanak initiated the Guru's *langar* in a common temple of bread, where the bread of God was given free to the children of man. "Let none be hungry where the spirit of God prevails. The Guru's people and the Guru were one home and one family." Guru Amar Das made it a rule that every visitor should dine in the *langar* before seeing him. Even Emperor Akbar was required to follow this practice, and he cheerfully did so.

In order to ensure a permanent source of food-grains and income for the maintenance of *langars*, many land-lords and ordinary farmers made adequate provisions for the kitchens attached to historical gurdwaras. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Sikh ruler) made endowments of lands and properties and often cash grants for this purpose. There was yet another source of funds, namely *daswand* (tithe), which was obligatory for the Khalsa for ensuring regular contributions for charities and religious purposes. Even today, many Sikhs contribute funds on a periodic basis for the running of free kitchens attached to gurdwaras. This is an obligation for the whole community, and is discharged with great humility and devotion. The *langar* provides us with a glimpse of real Sikhism at work, both in theory and practice.

PANGAT

The word *pangat* literally means a group of people sitting in a line without any distinction, and this practice was popularised by Guru Amar Das. The rules of the *langar* require that all should sit in the same row and partake of the same food without any distinction of high or low, rich or poor, and prince or peasant. This is the arrangement for feeding people in the *langar*. The community refectory is a place for training in service and for the practice of philanthropy and equality. The sharing of worship and food is an important part of the Sikh faith.

TAKHTS

Takht literally means a throne and a seat of authority. The establishment of *takhts* is a part of the historical growth of Sikhism. There are five *takhts*, one established by Guru Hargobind, and the remaining four are dedicated to the memory of Guru Gobind Singh. Each has a magnificent building. These *takhts* are centres of both religious and temporal authority, and appeals are made to them for obtaining decisions, spiritual as well as temporal.

Guru Hargobind established a *takht*, *Sri Akal Takht Sahib* at Amritsar. He believed that purely religious congregations should be held at the *Harimandir Sahib* (Golden Temple), while political and temporal matters should be considered at another forum. He, therefore, built *Akal Takht* in 1609 in the area facing the *darshani deohri* (entrance gateway) of the Golden Temple. Here, he held discussions on military and other matters, and organised the training of soldiers and the planning of strategy. This is the most powerful seat of authority vested with political and religious sovereignty. Matters of interest to the entire Panth as a whole are decided here.

The present site of *Takht Sri Patna Sahib* at Patna was originally a *dharamsala*, where Guru Tegh Bahadur lived with his family for some time.

The Tenth Guru established the Khalsa brotherhood at *Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib* (Anandpur) on the *Baisakhi* festival day in 1699. He prepared *Khande-da-Amrit* (nectar stirred with double-edged sword) and gave it to the *panj piaras* (five beloved ones). Then, he himself took *amrit* from their hands.

The sacred gurdwara of *Takht Sri Hazur Sahib* at Nanded, Maharashtra was built in memory of the death of Guru Gobind Singh. It was here that the Guru declared Adi Granth as the perpetual Guru of the Sikhs. Later, Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a fine structure.

AMRIT

Guru Gobind Singh initiated the practice of *amrit* or *khande-da-pahul* in 1699. This was the origin of the Khalsa Brotherhood. The *amrit* ceremony, as laid down by the Tenth Guru, has been adopted by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). Generally, a person who wants to be initiated as Khalsa, must follow the Sikh way of life for some time. The ceremony is performed by five practising *amritdhari* Sikhs. They must possess the *panj kakkas*, must be devout Sikhs, and physically perfect (not handicapped). Initiated Sikhs who have committed one or more of the prescribed *kurahits* (misdeeds) must offer the penance prescribed by the *panj piaras*, before they become eligible for a new initiation.

The *amrit* ceremony is held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. The candidates listen to the instructions of the *Jathedar* (leader)

of the *panj piaras* and signify their acceptance. Then *ardas* (prayer) is offered for the preparation of *amrit*. After the *hukam* (command), the *panj piaras* kneel around the iron-vessel containing some water and sugar-puffs, and stir it as they recite the five prescribed *banis*. This recitation takes about two hours. When the *amrit* is ready, another *ardas* is offered. After that, one by one, the candidates come forward and kneel before the *panj piaras*. Each one says: *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh* — God's is the Khalsa; God's is the victory, and is then given five handfuls of *amrit* to drink. His eyes and hair are sprinkled with *amrit* five times. The *amrit* left in the pot is drunk by the candidates one by one until the last drop is gone.

Then comes the second part of the *amrit* ceremony. The candidates are told by the leader of the *panj piaras* that hereafter their parents are Guru Gobind Singh and his wife Mata Sahib Kaur. They must vow to offer five daily prayers, vow to pay their *daswand* (tithe), and keep the *panj kakkas*. Then, he or she tells them about the rules of conduct and belief.

- i. There are five beliefs: God; Guru Granth Sahib; greeting by *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*; the unity of the ten Gurus; and *charhdi kala* (dynamic optimism).
- ii. There are the *panj kakkas* (five Sikh symbols): *Kes* (unshorn hair); *kara* (steel wrist bracelet); *kachha* (underpants); *kangha* (comb); and *kirpan* (sword).
- iii. There are five deliverances: *Dharam-nash* (freedom from previous religion), *karam-nash* (freedom from past deeds), *kul-nash* (freedom from family-influences), *krit-nash* (freedom from hereditary professional taboos), *bharam-nash* (freedom from superstition and ritual).
- iv. There are four rules of conduct: To offer prayers before undertaking any task; to lead a virtuous life; not to covet another's property; and to serve the Panth.
- v. There are four *kurahits*, which negate *amrit* : Removal of hair, eating *halal* meat, committing adultery, using tobacco, alcohol or drugs. There are also minor lapses which attract *tankhah* or religious punishment.

After taking these vows, an *ardas* is offered. The candidates have to add *Singh* (lion) in the case of a male, and *Kaur* (princess) in the case of a female to their names or get a new name in place of the old one. The Khalsa must wear a turban and keep the *panj kakkar*, plus the inner discipline of heroism, meditation, humility, piety, and social commitment. Guru Gobind Singh had defined the Khalsa thusly:

"He who meditates on the ever-radiant Light day and night, and rejects all else but the one Lord from his mind. He decorates himself with perfect love and faith and believes not in fasts, tombs, crematoriums, and hermit-cells, even by mistake. He knows none except the one Lord in the performance of acts of pilgrimage, charities, compassion, austerity, and self-control. Such a person, whose heart shines with the full divinely-radiant Light, is a true and pure Khalsa."

GURMATTÀ

Gurmattà literally means the Guru's decision, but in fact it is a resolution passed by the grand convention according to the *rahit-maryada* and it involves 'all decisions' affecting the Panth. The decisions are taken to clarify and support the fundamental principles of faith concerning the position of the Gurus, the *Adi Granth*, and organizational matters of the Panth. *Gurmattas* are binding on all Sikhs. Other questions such as political, social, or educational matters may also be decided by a *gurmattà*. Appeals against local decisions can be made to the *Akal Takht*, in Amritsar. The essential conditions for the validity of a *gurmattà* are as follows:

- i. A *gurmattà* must be taken at a *takht* in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- ii. The persons participating in it must have no hatred or enmity against one another, and must forget all mutual differences.
- iii. *Panj piaras*, including the *jathedars* (commanders), are to be elected by the participants on the basis of merit and religious talent.
- iv. A *gurmattà* has to be unanimous. There can be no *gurmattà* by a decision of a majority of votes.

- v. The subject of a *gurmatta* must be of Panthic importance and must have value for all the Sikhs and must not pertain to the welfare or interest of only a group or section of the Sikhs. It is related to the interest of the Sikh Commonwealth or the country as a whole. Its content may be social, political, or religious.
- vi. It is the duty of every Sikh, though he may not agree personally with a *gurmatta*, to honour and implement it.

In short, *gurmatta* is "the symbol and form of the supreme authority of the collective will of the people duly formulated." As it has the community's sanction behind it, and is taken in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, its rejection or violation is regarded as sacrilegious. The continuity of the Guru's message along with the capacity to adjust to the needs of a changing society is ensured through the institution of *gurmatta*.

The origin of *gurmatta* goes back to the days of Guru Gobind Singh. The tradition grew with the bestowal of sovereignty on the Khalsa Panth by the Tenth Guru. The *gurmatta* became a popular mode of decision-making in the eighteenth century in the critical times after his death.

MIRI AND PIRI

The word *piri* is of Muslim origin. *Pir* means a holy person or religious head. The word is also associated with a prophet, as Bhai Gurdas (a Sikh theologian) called the Sikh Gurus as *pirs*. *Miri* stands for power, rulership, and establishment of court.

Miri and *piri* took a formal shape when Guru Hargobind, at the time of his accession to the *gaddi* (throne) in 1606 donned two swords — one of *piri* (spiritual power) and the other of *miri* (temporal power).

The swords symbolised protection of the innocent and resistance to oppression. Guru Hargobind combined saintliness and warriorhood in his personality. He was an ascetic within and prince without (*Batanu Fakiri, Zahar Amiri*). He denounced *maya* (attachment, lure of the world) but not the world. *Piri* and *miri* represent the Sikh ideal of *deg* and *tegh*. *Deg* is the free kitchen, a symbol of *piri*, while *tegh* (sword) is a symbol of *miri*. *Piri* cannot flourish without *miri*. The union of both is essential. The combination of the qualities of *miri*

and *piri* led to the creation of the saint-soldier concept of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Gurdas says: "Just as a fence is necessary to keep away stray cattle from the farm, just as the *kikkar* (a thorny tree) guards the orchard, just as the snake protects the sandal-tree, just as the dog guards the house against strangers, in the same way, the man of God must protect himself with the sword."

MANJI SYSTEM

Manjis were areas of jurisdiction for the purpose of preaching. Guru Amar Das created this new order of preaching by establishing a *manji* system. Various *sangat*s had sprung up all over, while he generally remained at the headquarters. He appointed devoted Sikhs, men and women of high character, to the establishment of the new order. They were to give an exposition of the Guru's hymns and provide their own *charan-amrit* for initiation into Sikhism. They also served as a link between the Guru and the *sangat*, and were regarded as the Guru's agents in their region. In the course of time, twenty-two devout Sikhs were granted a *manji* each, for the extension of missionary work during 1552-1574. The *manji* was awarded for spiritual attainment and the capacity for missionary work, and was not a territorial or temporal assignment. The *manji* holders initiated the followers and taught them Punjabi. They paid periodical visits to Guru Amar Das at Goindwal. The *manjis* were neither permanent nor hereditary. In the initial stages, the system was very helpful in the spread of Sikhism. With passage of time, however, the *masands* holding *manjis* became corrupt. For this reason Guru Gobind Singh abolished the *manjis*.

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INSTITUTION OF PANJ PIARAS — ITS POTENTIAL AND PRESENT PERSPECTIVE

Prof. Madanjit Kaur

Introduced on the foundation day of the Khalsa, the Baisakhi of the year 1699, at Anandpur Sahib, by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of the Sikhs, the *Panj Piaras* is a familiar entity of the Sikh society.

After bestowing *amrit* (nectar) to the five tried Sikhs (Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Mohkam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh) and granting them the title of *Panj Piaras* (Five Beloved), Guru Gobind Singh himself took *amrit* from the newly initiated Khalsa.¹ The Tenth Master established their spiritual and temporal authority in matters of the Sikh community by further declaring, "Henceforth, the Khalsa is the Guru, and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me".² By this declaration, Guru Gobind Singh invested the Sikh community with the dignity of equality and fraternity, and inaugurated a new custom for initiation (*Khande da pahul*) into the Sikh faith.³

The newly initiated Sikhs, *Panj Piaras*, were destined to play a significant role in the history of the Sikh community. These *Panj Piaras* have been immortalized in the daily prayer, *Ardas*, of the Sikhs, in which they have been placed immediately after the holy names of the ten masters (*Dasan patshahian*).⁴ Before his demise, Guru Gobind Singh bestowed the succession of guruship on Guru Granth Sahib,⁵ and designated the leadership of the Sikh Panth to the Khalsa, represented by *Panj Piaras*.⁶

The history of the origin and development of the *Panj Piaras* is evidence of the fact that the Sikh concept of the *Panj Piaras* is an original one, and that it has not been borrowed from any other religious or political system. It is true that the ideas of *Panch Panchayat* and *Panch mein Parmeshwar* are well rooted in the ancient Indian political system,⁷ but the connotation, working and implication of the Sikh institution of *Panj Piaras* are distinct. It is not a prototype or imitation

of the Hindu polity. In its concept and application, the Sikh institution of *Panj Piaras* is unique and unparalleled in the history of world civilization. It is definitely a product of the Sikh ideology, deeply grounded in the democratic traditions as propagated and practised by the Sikh Gurus. In fact, the institution of *Panj Piaras* is part and parcel of the Sikh practices.

The term *Panch* has been mentioned at various places in the devotional compositions compiled in Guru Granth Sahib. In *Japuji*, Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, has emphasized the significance of the supremacy and validity of the tradition associated with the Indian concept of *Panch* both in temporal and spiritual spheres.⁸ The equivalent of the term *Panch* in the Punjabi language is *Panj* (meaning five). By adding the word *Piara* (beloved) as a suffix to the term *Panj*, Guru Gobind Singh made it clear, that he was defining the authority of a new collective body of those Sikhs who are dear to him and that he has bestowed on them the special honour and status similar to the one reserved for the Guru himself.⁹

In the Sikh scripture and early Sikh literature, the fundamental democratic belief of Sikh ideology regarding the concept of the holy assembly of the five (*Panj*) occurs repeatedly, i.e., that one disciple is a single Sikh, two form a holy association (*sadh sangat*), but an assembly of five represents the spirit and blessings of God Himself.¹⁰ By forming the collective body of the *Panj Piaras*, Guru Gobind Singh perfected the tradition of the holy assembly of the five in the Sikh *sangat* (congregation), and provided it with a complete and concrete shape, a new name, a new status and a new role. It is to be noted that through innovation, Guru Gobind Singh infused the democratic spirit at grass root level among the Sikhs, and generated a revolutionary change in the political attitude of the Indian masses. The Guru was the forerunner of the theory of a classless society and sovereignty of the people. The *Panj Piaras* belonged to different castes, but Guru Gobind Singh merged them into one casteless society — the Brotherhood of the Khalsa with a distinct identity, symbols (the five *kakars* i.e., *kesh*, *kangha*, *kara*, *kirpan* and *kachhehra*) as a uniform. Armed like soldiers, the Sikhs could easily be recognised from a distance. With a distinct identity and commitment to social concern, the infrastructure of an egalitarian society was raised, in which justice was to be administered on the basis of equality. Further, by taking *amrit* from the *Panj Piaras*,

Guru Gobind Singh gave the final touch to the basic trait of the Sikh doctrine of sovereignty. The order of the Khalsa was a logical consummation of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, which attach high significance to the individual as well as the collective society.¹¹ In fact, by founding the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh rejected the theory of divine right of kings, and advocated the modern democratic principle that the real sovereignty is with the people. The introduction of the institution of *Panj Piaras* established some fundamental equations in the social structure of the Sikh community.

Right from its inception, great importance was attached to the authority of the *Panj Piaras*. Guru Gobind Singh readily submitted before the collective decision of the *Panj Piaras* directing him to leave the fort of Chamkaur in the larger interests of the Sikh Panth, although he was not personally in favour of evacuating the fort. But, the Guru wanted to set an example by which the status of the *Panj Piaras* could be raised to a high position so that no Sikh could dare to defy their orders. This was further reinforced when Guru Gobind Singh willingly paid a fine imposed by the *Panj Piaras* for saluting with his arrow in front of the grave of Muslim Fakir Dadu.¹²

Panj Piaras are always given prominence on all Sikh ceremonial occasions and functions of religious as well as political importance. The most important religious ceremony of the Sikhs is *amrit sanchar* (initiation ceremony). It can be performed only by the *Panj Piaras*. The *amrit* is prepared by the *Panj Piaras* with a *khanda* (double-edged sword) and recitation of prescribed *Gurbani* for the occasion, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. The *Panj Piaras* have the authority to punish a defaulting Sikh and to rebaptise the *tankhaiyas*. Things are finalised in the decision making assemblies (*sarbat khalsa* or *sangats*) of the Sikh community only in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, through the *Panj Piaras*. All religious processions of the Sikhs are led by the *Panj Piaras*. All functions inaugurating important projects for the fulfilment of noble values, social welfare and service of humanity (*sewa*), for which Sikhism stands, are performed by the *Panj Piaras*. The foundation stones of gurdwaras, *dharamsalas*, *sarais*, roads, tanks, bridges, etc., are laid by the *Panj Piaras*. *Kar sewa* (desilting of the holy tanks), repair and construction of gurdwara buildings are also initiated by the *Panj Piaras*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has been sanctified in the Sikh prayer. At the end of *Ardas*, *karah prasad* (sacramental food) is offered to the *Panj Piaras*, before it is distributed to the *sangat*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* holds highest position after the Gurus among the Sikhs. They became *defacto* and *de jure* representatives of the Sikh Panth. The leadership of the Sikh nation was imbibed in them. They exercise executive as well as judicial powers in community matters. The authority of the *Panj Piaras* is legitimate, and they have the final word in deciding the socio-religious and political issues of the Sikh community.¹³ No Sikh can defy the orders (*hukam-nama*) and punishment (*tankhah*) imposed by the *Panj Piaras* for violating the Sikh code of conduct, Sikh beliefs, Sikh traditions and Sikh customs. This system is prevalent even today. The main sanction behind the authority of the *Panj Piaras* lies in the faith of the Sikhs that the Guru is mystically present among them.

The *Panj Piaras* are chosen by the *sangat* but the *jathedars* of the five *takhts* (the Sikh seats of authority, i.e., Akal Takht Sahib, Keshgarh Sahib, Damdama Sahib, Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib) hold special status as *Panj Piaras*.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has greatly influenced the culture, thought, social values and political behaviour of Sikhs. The annals of Sikh history are replete with evidence of the vital role of the *Panj Piaras*. It has helped to nourish the continuity of democratic traits and collective responsibility in the Sikh community. The Sikh democratic concept of the collective responsibility was put into practice by Banda Singh Bahadur, who gave militant leadership to the Sikh Panth, fought against the Mughals, and established the first Sikh *Raj* in the Punjab (1710-1716). The rule of Banda Singh Bahadur was established on the basis of egalitarian principles. The land-less peasants were granted lands. Even the seal and coins of Banda Singh Bahadur do not bear the name of the ruler, and are true index of the democratic tradition of the Sikhs. This republican spirit continued to prevail in the political set-up of the *Misls*, when all matters of the common interest of the Sikh community were discussed in the assemblies of the *Sarbat Khalsa* at Akal Takht (the highest political seat of the Sikhs) at Amritsar. In the assemblies of the *Sarbat Khalsa*, decisions were taken by passing the *gurmata*s (resolutions) in the holy presence of Guru Granth Sahib for

collective action of the Sikhs. During this time, defence of Sikh territories and holy places against the onslaughts of the Mughals and the Afghans was the major problem of the Sikhs. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the democratic and republican trait of the Sikh heritage is reflected in various aspects of the rulership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The coins of Maharaja Ranjit Singh do not bear his name. They carry the same legends which were prevalent on the coinage of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikh *Misls*. Even the Government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was called *Sarkar Khalsa*. The Maharaja never wore any crown or sat on a throne. The impact of the institution of *Panj Piaras* on the Sikh community can be traced even in the development of the defence organisation and the military system of the Sikhs after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1839), when the Khalsa army was left leaderless under the anarchy infused by treachery and intrigues of the military generals and ministers of Lahore Darbar. During this period (1839-48) of chaos and confusion, the *Army Panchayats*¹⁴ played a very crucial role in inspiring the Sikhs to keep their democratic traditions alive. The *Army Panchayats* kept them politically conscious of their rights by guiding them to carry on the struggle against the British.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has also acted as a safety valve for the security of the Sikh value system. It is a known fact that the Sikh community has moved through the most hazardous challenges at several stages of their history, but they have kept their tryst with destiny and managed to survive. During the nineteenth century, they faced a crisis of identity as a distinct community under the dominating impact of the activities of some Christian missionaries, and the revival of orthodox *Brahminism*. At this crucial juncture, there appeared a phenomenon of the Sikh resurgence in the form of the Singh Sabha Movement, which consequently emerged as a strong religious and political organisation of the Sikhs on modern lines. At this juncture, the spirit of collective responsibility and tradition of *Panj Piaras* motivated the Sikh masses and provided them effective guidance and competent leadership to deal with the situation. Sikhs were fully conscious about the potentiality of this Institution in reviving their glorious traditions and fundamental doctrines of Sikhism. They did not look to a single leader to direct their social, political and religious activities, but opted for a collective leadership. It is clear from the history of the

Singh Sabha Movement that its success was, to a great extent, the result of the able leadership of its five top Sikh leaders i.e., Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, Professor Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Sardar Maya Singh and Sardar Jawahar Singh. Under their efficient stewardship, rational thinking, sincere commitment, and profound contributions, the Singh Sabha Movement became a mass movement among the Sikhs within a short span of time. Their joint leadership, with the support of the Sikh masses, gave suitable response to the challenges from outside, and protected the cultural heritage of the Sikhs at the hour of crisis. The Sikhs moved from a chaos of social confusion and political insecurity into a state of self-awareness and self-confidence. They evolved into a well organised community and political entity. With the formation of Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the advent of Sikh Renaissance attained its full maturity. The spirit of self-awareness heralded an era of cultural awakening among the Sikhs. Serious attempts were made in the spheres of literature and journalism to produce standard books, tracts, pamphlets, newspapers and magazines, projecting fundamental Sikh doctrines and recording true Sikh traditions and their glorious past. The objective was to motivate the Sikhs to follow their original beliefs, traditions and practices. In fact, the Singh Sabha Movement regenerated the tradition of collective responsibility enshrined in the institution of *Panj Piaras* and made Sikhs conscious of the utility and validity of their democratic and republican traits.

The Singh Sabha Movement was followed by the Gurdwara Reforms Movement, which re-established the control of the Sikhs over their historical gurdwaras, earlier under the control of the *mahants*, British agents and the British hegemony. This great success was due to the collective efforts of the Sikh community under a collective leadership.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* is the highest court of appeal for the Sikhs. The scope and jurisdiction of the authority of the *Panj Piaras* is very wide. It is an effective check on arbitrary ways of working of the elites of the community. In the customary system of Sikh law, the sole authority to make impartial decisions in Panthic matters is vested in the *Panj Piaras*. Its decisions are bound to be followed by all Sikhs whatsoever their private or official position may be. If a person shows some reluctance in obeying the authority of the *Panj Piaras*, he is

declared outcaste, and Sikhs do not retain any social contacts with him. There is not even a single example on record in Sikh history of violating the orders of the *Panj Piaras*. All parties, factions and groups have to obey the decision of the *Panj Piaras*, forgetting their personal rivalries. The orders of the *Panj Piaras* are issued not with any vindictiveness, but with a purpose to bring conformity, unity and solidarity in the Sikh Panth besides reform of the individual. Therefore, the punishment meted out is willingly accepted by the defaulters. The problems of local interests are discussed in local *sangats*, which exist in most of the places where the Sikhs have settled down. The matters of Panthic interests are referred to *Akal Takht* for further action.

By forming the unique institution of *Panj Piaras* about half a century before the French philosopher, J.J. Rousseau introduced his theory of 'Social Contract' (1762), and about a century and half before Karl Marx formulated his 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' (1848), the great Guru had made a most notable contribution to the modern political thought by introducing the idea of the Republic of the Five.

The institution of *Panj Piaras* has proved to be a strong measure in fostering cohesion and integration in the Sikh community. The impact of this institution can be traced from the Sikh history of the post-Guru Gobind Singh period. It was the observance of this tradition which preserved the Sikh unity intact under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, the *Dal Khalsa*, the *Sarbat Khalsa*, the *Misls*, the *Khalsa Raj*, the *Army Panchayats* (after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh), and the Singh Sabha Movement. Even at present, the central Sikh organisation, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee is observing with reverence the institution of *Panj Piaras* in its working, to deal with socio-religious and political problems of the Sikhs. Among the religious communities of India, Sikhs are more conscious about their cultural identity and survival as a distinct community in the global society, than others. The Sikhs have a glorious heritage and the annals of the Sikh history are full of accounts of their heroism and sacrifice. The Sikhs are very sensitive to aspersion on their psyche. They react intensively in such situations. Currently, the Sikh community is again facing serious problems concerning preservation of their distinct identity, its traditions and practices, the prejudice and bias of the anti-Sikh lobbies, the misrepresentation of Sikhism by hostile bodies with vested interests, and various challenges of the modern materialistic culture to

the universal doctrines and values of Sikhism. The Sikhs are confronting multi-dimensional social, religious, political and academic issues from within and without. The situation demands serious contemplation on the part of Sikh leaders, Sikh missionaries and Sikh academicians to renew our institutions with specific expertise to deal with specific problems.

It is the dire need of the hour to strengthen and revive the institution of *Panj Piaras* at global level for consolidating the present position and future survival of the Sikhs as a minority all over the world.

NOTES

1. The ceremony of the initiation of the Khalsa on the Baisakhi day (1699) and its *maryada* (code of conduct) and its rites *Khande de Pahul* are recorded for the first time by Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib in his work, *Sri Gursobha* (1711 A.D.) Ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Pub. Sikh History Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1967, Ch. 5, pp. 29-41. However, *Gursobha* does not list the names of the *Panj Piaras*.

The episode of the *Panj Piaras*, their names and detail of the preparation of *amrit* have been recorded in the *Gurbilas* literature associated with Guru Gobind Singh. See, Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das* (1751 A.D.) Ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Pub. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, Ch. 9, pp. 127-139, also Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das* (1797 A.D.) Mss (personal Library, Dr Trilochan Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar, Ludhiana), folios 90-92, 45-4.

2. Kavi Sainapat describes the above episode as following:

ਵਾਹਿ ਸਮੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਬੇਨ ਸੁਨਾਯੋ । ਖਾਲਸ ਅਪਨੇ ਰੂਪ ਬਤਾਯੋ ।

"ਖਾਲਸ ਹੀ ਸੇ ਹੈ ਮਮ ਕਾਮਾ । ਬਖਸ ਕਿਯੋ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੇ ਜਾਮਾ ।

ਖਾਲਸ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ, ਹੇ ਖਾਲਸ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ ।

ਆਇ ਅੰਤ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ, ਖਾਲਸ ਹੀ ਮੈ ਬਾਸ ।।

— *Sri Gursobha*, Ch. 19, p. 132.

Santokh Singh, author of *Suraj Prakash Granth* records the junction as:

ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁ ਰਹਤ ਪੰਰ ਜਾਹਿ ਮਿਲੇ ।

ਮਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਸੇ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਭਲੇ ।

— *Suraj Prakash Granth*, 1843 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, p. 6331.

3. Macauliffe, M.A., 'The Sikh Religion', Chand & Co., New Delhi, Vol. 5, p. 96.

4. ਦਿਸਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੇਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਦੀਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ । ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ, ਚੋਹਾਂ ਸਾਹਿਬਜ਼ਾਦਿਆਂ, ਚਾਲ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਮੁਕਤਿਆਂ, ਹਠੀਆਂ, ਜਪੀਆਂ, ਤਪੀਆਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿਆ, ਵੰਡ ਛਕਿਆ, ਦੇਗ ਚਲਾਈ, ਤੇਗ ਵਾਹੀ, ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਅਣਭਿੰਨ ਕੀਤਾ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ, ਸਚਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

— Quoted from

Ardas

5. ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੈ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ ।।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ।।

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹਿ ।।

ਜਾ ਕੇ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਸੁਧ ਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸਬਦ ਮੈ ਲੇਹੁ ।।

— According to a Popular Sikh Tradition.

Rahitnama Bhai Prahlad Singh Ka.

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉ, ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਪੰਥ ।।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮ ਯਹ, ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ।।

— Ashok, Shamsher, Singh, *Guru Khalse De Hukamname*, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979, p. 58.

6. The importance of the *Panj Piaras* has been stressed with great emphasis in the *Rahitnamas* (Sikh codes of Conduct). See *Guru Khalse De Hukamname*, Ed. Shamsher Singh Ashok, Sikh History Research Board, Amritsar, 1979 (Typed Copy).

Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh:

ਪੰਜ ਸਿਖ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੇਣੀ ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿਖ ਕਰਨਾ ।

— Ibid., p. 21.

Tankhah Updesh Bhai Daya Singh:

ਪੰਚ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿਲ ਇਕਠੇ, ਕਰੇ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬਿਚਾਰ ।।

ਤਨਖਾਹ ਰਹਿਤ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਰ, ਦੇਤ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਟਾਰ ।।

— Ibid., p. 63.

Rahitnama Bhai Prahlad Singh Ka:

ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਾਨੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹੁ ॥
ਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਮੇ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਚਹੈ, ਖੋਜ ਇਨੇ ਮੇ ਲੇਹੁ ॥

-- Ibid., p. 57.

Later Sikh writers like Sarup Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, 1773 A.D., Pub. Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, Part II, 1971, p. 134, Kesar Singh Chhibar, *Bansawali Nama Dasam Patshahian Ka*, 1779 A.D., Pub. in *Parakh*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Vol. II, 1972, p. 129., Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash Granth*, 1823 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, p. 5902, p. 6328., and Gian Singh Giani, *Panth Prakash*, 1874 A.D, Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, 1970, part II., follow this tradition of the foundation of the Khalsa and *Panj Piaras* with additional details. The following remarks are noteworthy.

Sarup Das Bhalla writes in this context:

ਪੰਚ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਜੇ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਤਾ ਸਿਉ ਲਏ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ ॥

Mahima Prakash, 1773 A.D., Pub. Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, 1971, part II, p. 805.

Ratan Singh Bhanghu writes:

ਜਹਿ ਜਹਿ ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀ ਹੋਇ ।
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੈ ਤੁਲ ਮੰਨ ਲਯੋ ਸੋਇ ।
ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀ ਜਹਿ ਇਕੱਤ੍ਰ ਹੋਇ ।
ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਕਰ ਪਯਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ।
ਪੰਜ ਭੁਜੰਗੀਅਨ ਤੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਾਓ ।
ਜੇ ਮਾਂਗੋ ਸੋਈ ਫਲ ਪਾਓ ।

-- *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 1948 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1982, p. 45.

Santokh Singh accounts:

ਗੁਰ ਘਰ ਕੀ ਮਿਰਜਾਦਾ ਪੰਚਹੁ,
ਪੰਚਹੁ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਪੁਰਬ ਪੀਨ ।

ਹੁਇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ ਬਖਸ਼ਹਿ ਪੰਚਹੁ, ਪਾਹੁਲ ਦੇ ਮਿਲ ਪੰਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨ ।

— *Suraj Prakash Granth*, 1843 A.D., Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Vol. 14, p. 5902.

He also writes:

ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁ ਰਹਤ ਪੰਚ ਜਹਿ ਮਿਲੇ । ਮਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਸੇ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਭਲੇ । — *Ibid.*, p. 6328.

Early European accounts also point out the significance of the *Panj Piaras* in the Sikh community. For the declaration about five Sikhs forming a congregation or about the assembly of five Sikhs ensuring the presence or the grace of the Guru, see Malcolm, 'Sketch of the Sikhs', John Murray, London, 1812, p. 196; also Cunningham, J.D., 'History of the Sikhs', Chand & Co., Delhi, p. 63.

7. *Panch* (Five) is a Sanskrit term. It has been virtually adopted by various Indian Vernaculars. The numerical five was considered holy in the Hindu Mythology and the term *Panch* is regarded as a symbol of justice. The *Panches* (the five arbitrators are considered as representatives of God, therefore, *Panches* constitute *Parneshwar* (God, the Supreme Lord). The *Panchayat* is the traditional local administrative machinery in India since ages. It is a documentary evidence of the ancient Indian democratic system.

8. ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ॥ ਪੰਚੇ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

ਪੰਚੇ ਸੇਹਹਿ ਦਰਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥ ਪੰਚਾ ਕਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਏਕੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਕਹੈ ਕਰੈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੈ ਕਰਣੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਸੁਮਾਰੁ ॥

— *Japuji*, Pauri 16, M1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 2.

9. The honour attributed to the *Panj Piaras* by Guru Gobind Singh has been elucidated by the nineteenth century Sikh historian Bhai Santokh Singh as follows:

ਸਿਖ ਪੰਚਨ ਮਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਸਾ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰੇ ਧਰਹਿ ਜੇ ਆਸਾ ॥

— *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, Ain 2, Ansu 23, Vol. 14, p. 63311

10. The importance of the presence of the assembly of the five Sikhs has been described by Guru Nanak Dev as following:

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪੰਚ ਸਖੇ ਗੁਰਭਾਈ॥

— *Maru Solih, M1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1041.*

The importance of the company of the *Panj* (five perfect ones) is also affirmed by Bhai Gurdas, the first Sikh scholar to produce a commentary on Sikh doctrines and the lives of the early Sikh Gurus. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary of Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Hargobind. Bhai Gurdas's work is a documentary evidence of the beliefs and practices of the Sikhs in the late sixteenth and early half of the seventeenth century. He comments on the above mentioned subject:

ਇਕ ਸਿਖੁ ਦੁਇ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗ ਪੰਜੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ॥

— *Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 13, Ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1964, p. 146.*

Again, Bhai Gurdas refers to the assembly of five Sikhs as follows:

ਪੰਜ ਮਿਲੇ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਤਜਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਸਬਦ ਸਬਦ ਲਿਵਲਾਈ॥

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸੇਹਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਈ॥

— *Ibid., Var 29, p. 318.*

11. Kapur Singh, 'Sikhism for Modern Man', Eds. Madanjit Kaur and Piar Singh, Pub. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1992, pp. 66-67.
12. The gesture of the Guru was objected by the fellow Sikhs because Sikhism does not believe in the worship of idols, *avtars* (re-incarnation), and graves.
13. Once the matter of violation of the basic tenets of Sikhism on the part of a Sikh is brought to the notice of the Akal Takht, the *jathedar* is authorized to summon him before the *Panj Piaras* and punish the defaulter accordingly. The matter is discussed, and decision (*mata*) is taken with common consent by the *Panj Piaras*. Then the decision is announced to the *sangat*. These decisions are carried unanimously and it is supposed to have the sanctity of the Guru, and any attempt afterwards to subvert the decision is regarded as a sacrilegious act. If a defaulter does not submit before the *Panj Piaras*, he is declared an outcaste, and Sikhs are forbidden to have any contact with him. To the Sikh community, the authority of the *Panj Piaras* is supreme.

14. The proclamation of the *Panchayat* councils by the Sikh army was a great adventure in republican traits of Sikhs, associated with the institution of *Panj Piaras*. It would not be out of place here to give a note on the role of the army *Panchayats*, its objective, working responsibilities and achievements at the Lahore *Darbar*.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, a decade of political instability, disintegration and decay followed. The weakening of the central power at the Lahore *Darbar* seriously affected the discipline and command of its defence organisation. Within a short time, almost all control of the Government, over the army (*Fauj-i-Ain*, *Fauj-i-Qwaid* and *Jagirdari Fauj*) disappeared rapidly. The *Jagirdars* became independent of control of the Lahore *Darbar*. However, the soldiers of the Sikh army collected together and kept the ethos of the Sikh democratic spirit alive by introducing the army *Panchayat* system. These *Panchayats* were elected at the rate of five *panches* (judges) per company. The elected representatives of army companies had no independent position, but existed only as part and parcel of the regimental committees. All the committees were subject to control of their electors. The regimental committees held their meetings frequently. The general meetings of all the *chaudharis* (magistrates) helped *Panchayats* to enforce discipline among the troops by punishing the excesses committed by them. These regimental *Panchayats*, by the imposition of an iron discipline, saved the Lahore Kingdom's army from disintegration. The army *Panchayats* acquired a highly representative character. The army assumed the title of the Khalsa (supreme Sikh authority). It began to issue orders under its own seal to the regent, army officers and local officers. The Lahore *Darbar* was forbidden to make any communication with the British without its sanction. The soldiers established regimental committees that took disciplinary powers from the officers. This attitude of the army was the reaction of the treacherous role of the army officers of the Lahore *Darbar*. In fact, the army officers had forfeited the confidence of their soldiers, because in collaboration with the civil officers, they were secretly holding negotiations with the British to barter away the independence of the Sikh kingdom.

The introduction of the army *Panchayat* system at Lahore *Darbar* is a singularly characteristic event in the history of the Sikhs. These

Panchayats represented the army and the people, and acted as the supreme civil and military authority in the state. However, these councils did not alter the structure of the Sikh state, or forward any proposal to replace their nominal sovereign. In fact, the regimental committees were independent and non-interfering in the local administration. But, unitedly these councils became the supreme national authority of the Sikh kingdom of Lahore.

The army *Panchayats* had also established rapport with the people. Generally, the councils held their deliberations in public, its decisions were precise and their execution firm and instantaneous. These councils curbed the ambitions of the Jammu *Rajas*, quelled the insurrections of the pretenders to the throne of the Lahore kingdom (i.e., Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh), liquidated the Sandhanwalia faction, proclaimed Daleep Singh, the minor son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as successor to the Lahore kingdom. (The narration of the above note is largely borrowed from Bhagat Singh's 'Sikh Polity', Oriental Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 310-314).

The achievements of the army *Panchayats* bear testimony to the potentiality of the institution of *Panj Piaras*. This development in the past history of the Sikhs provides an incentive to the Sikh community in the present context to deal with some of their internal problems, like helping the victims of the recent Punjab problem, building a close-knit society, eradicating poverty, illiteracy, women abuse, child abuse, and other social evils. The Sikhs should establish local councils to deal with their local problems. These councils could solve the issues of autocracy of the elite groups, and corrupt and dishonest leadership.

15. There is a well-known tradition that Baba Phula Singh, the famous Akali leader, in charge of Akal Takht, once ordered Maharaja Ranjit Singh to appear before the Akal Takht for violating the Sikh code of conduct. The Maharaja obeyed the order and presented himself before the Sikh *sangat* and the *Panj Piaras* to accept the punishment (*tankhah*) imposed on him.

In recent past, Sikh leaders like Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh, Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala, President Giani Zail Singh, Jathedar Santokh

Singh, Cabinet Minister Buta Singh, Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal and several other Sikhs holding high ranks and positions, have been declared as *tankhaiyas* (defaulters) at the Akal Takht for their conduct and activities against the general interest of the Sikh community. Recently, charges of aspersions and doubts on authenticity of the Sikh Scripture and Sikh doctrines, have also been referred to the *Panj Piaras* at Akal Takht. It is to be noted here, that, all the defaulters are treated and tried uniformly. There is no room for any discrimination in this democratic procedure of the Sikh law.

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SIKH INSTITUTIONS – THEIR POTENTIAL AND CONTRIBUTION

Baljit Kaur

An institution is a body for promotion of certain ideals to regulate a society. Institutions normally are created during periods of moral ascendancy or total decay, and grow and blossom according to the personal integrity and stature of the man at the helm, giving direction to or steering the affairs. These men are usually larger than life — you have to have a conception of a project, before you can give it shape.

India in the fifteenth century was at its nadir — people were superstitious, spineless, servile, spiritless and caste-ridden in front of ruthless fortune-hunters, and fell like a house of cards. It was, "the dark age".

Guru Nanak was a witness to the state of affairs, and being a visionary, he wanted to pull the people out of the slush they had sunk into. He pictured a society where men would breathe freely, were courageous, upright, honest, hardworking, unsuperstitious, discerning, casteless and spiritual.

Thus, he laid the foundation of certain socio-political institutions which were nurtured by him and his successor gurus, and gradually grew an edifice which found its epitome in the Khalsa Panth with the blessings of the Tenth Master. In this paper, we shall focus on some premier Sikh institutions, and look into their inception, potential, growth and present status.

1. SIKH GURUS

The institution of *guruship* has been vital in the continuous development of the Sikh community, and has ensured cohesion, solidarity and a sense of community among the Sikhs. Guru means an enlightener, a messenger of God, who enables man to tread the righteous path to salvation. Bhai Gurdas says, "*Nanak nirmal panth chalaiya*", i.e., "Nanak started a pure society".

The office of Guru, which embody the Holy Spirit, was passed on from one Guru to the next. "All Gurus are identical to Nanak". Thus, the Guru was the central unifying personality inspite of changes in succession. The greatest single organizational step was to select purely on merit, a worthy successor.

The Sikh Gurus who initiated the movement, determined its ideology and goals, and carefully organized and nursed it for over two hundred years, starting with the missionary tours of Guru Nanak to the demise of the Tenth Guru — thus preventing deviation from its stated ideology. Originally, it was the Guru that guided. Later, it was their ideology which gave direction.

On the Gurus' own testimony, this ideology was dictated by God Himself. Guru Nanak says, "Oh Lalo as God speaks to me, so do I convey." The personality of the Guru is in operation in the Sikh. He links himself with the Guru, and thus is linked with the inexhaustable power of the Creator.

All institutions of the Khalsa Panth in their very being and working enshrine and reflect the spirit and original impulse of the Guru's vision. The Guru visualized a Common-Wealth. "Where everybody could experience a sense of partnership, and no body would feel an outsider". (SGGS, p. 97)

The Sikh Gurus established the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. They taught that spiritual transformation must precede social and political transformation. The Sikh Gurus insisted on selfless service. The Sikh movement struggled against anti-social and anti-human institutions like the caste system, inequality of the sexes, and religious and political domination.

The Gurus aimed at complete emancipation of man. They believed and preached that life could not be compartmentalized, and had to be lived with intelligent discernment and total integrity at every level. Resistance against injustice was also a religious duty.

Guru Nanak started the institution of *dharamsalas* and *sangats*, as Sikhism was a congregational faith. The succeeding gurus further extended and consolidated these institutions — Guru Amar Das systematized the institution of *manjis*, and created 22 centres for extension of the mission, with Goindwal as headquarters. He fixed two

occasions in the year when his followers could come from far and near. Hearts of men had to be strung together across the barriers of caste and religion, and to break these, institutions such as *Guru ka langar* and *pangut* were introduced. Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjun set up new centres at Amritsar and Tarn-Taran.

Guru Angad invented the Gurmukhi script, and Guru Arjun compiled the Sikh Scripture. These steps went a long way in establishing the identity of the Sikhs. "With a distinct organization, separate religious centres, a separate script and a Scripture of their own, they became a separate church and a new society."

Guru Nanak's spiritual mission was carried forward by the successor Gurus, and was extended by Guru Hargobind after Guru Arjun's martyrdom, who put on two swords — one depicting temporal and the other spiritual power (*mini-piri*). After Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa Panth, who took up cudgels against the tyranny of the contemporary ruler. Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikh *mists* fought, and Ranjit Singh established a kingdom on the same principles. Thus grew up a well organized, militant, socio-religious and economically self-reliant community, which was not only able to survive the ups and downs of history, but even able to maintain its separate identity.

The Guru's thrust was on moral and spiritual uplift and service to humanity. This view was diametrically opposed to the traditional existing system. It did not believe in the dichotomy of life. The Guru established a religion of householders in direct contrast to the concept of celibacy and asceticism. The egalitarianism of Sikhs abolished not only the caste hierarchy, but also the gender discrimination.

The pinnacle came with the institution of *amrit*. In 1699, the Guru created the Khalsa. After baptising the first five *amritdhari* Sikhs (*Panj Piaras*), the Guru knelt before them, asking them to baptise him, thus, there was no difference between the Guru and the disciple, they were one. Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh conferred the guruship on Guru Granth Sahib, declaring it the last and Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

The Gurus did not accept the current concept of man's 'fall from grace'. They believed that man could evolve out of his weakness.

Hence, they offered an ideology of optimism. Guru Nanak's teachings can be reduced to three simple commandments. One — *Kirat Karo*, two — *Naam Japo*, three — *Vand Chhako*, i.e., work hard, remember God, and share your earnings. "The grace of God is where the downtrodden are looked after." (SGGS, p. 15)

Gokal Chand Narang says, "the sword which carved the Khalsa was undoubtedly forged by Gobind Singh, but the steel was provided by Nanak." Prof. Teja Singh says, "The Gurus took in hand the training of a nation, each gave as much instruction as was needed, passing it on to the next Guru when the work of one generation was finished. This way the whole training extended to ten generations."

The conscience of the ten Gurus will pervade the whole human culture for all time to come. The religion of the Gurus is briefly the art of living fully, keeping the divine light aflame.

2. GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Guru Granth Sahib is an unique scripture embodying all that is sacred. It is not only the scripture of the Sikhs but also their Eternal Guru — having been installed as such in 1708 A.D. by Guru Gobind Singh. For the Sikhs, the Guru is a holy teacher, a prophet under direct commission from God — the ten who have been and Guru Granth Sahib, which is the continuing visible manifestation (*Shabadguru*).

*"Bani Guru, Guru Hai Bani
Vhich Bani Amrit Sarai."*

SGGS, p. 982

"It is, therefore, the perpetual authority for those who live their lives in response to it and through it."

From Guru Granth Sahib, the communities, institutions and rituals derive their meaning, aspirations, resolutions and actions and their authority. Said Toynbee, a renowned historian of our times, "Of all known religious scriptures, this book is the most highly venerated. It means more to the Sikhs than the Quran to the Muslims, the Bible to the Christians, and the Torah to Jews. The Adi Granth is to the Sikhs their perpetual Guru (Spiritual Guide)". The Sikhs conclude their daily prayer by the last commandment of the Tenth Guru.

*"Agya bhayi Akal ki,
Tabhi chalayio Panth.
Sabh Sikhan ko hukam hai,*

*Guru maniyo Granth.
Guru Granth ji maniyo,
Pragat Guran ki deh.
Jo Prabh ko milbo chahein,
Khoj Shabad mai Lahain."*

"Thus commanded the Timeless God:
And there was established the (Khalsa) Panth.
All disciples (Sikhs) are commanded hereby,
To recognize the holy Granth as the Guru.
Recognize the holy Guru Granth,
As the visible embodiment of the Masters.
All those who wish to see the Lord God,
Must seek Him in (the contemplation of) the holy word."

Duncan Greenles, the author of 'World Gospel Series', says,
"The Granth is the Guru's own Book, through which the Guru speaks
to his disciples from age to age".

The Granth is a marvellous heritage of the Indian subcontinent, for its 1430 pages contain not only the sacred writings of the Sikh Gurus, but also those of a number of medieval saints, both Hindu and Muslim. The Gurus taught the noble quality of appreciating and imbibing all that was good and valuable, which brought forth a new concept of universal man, and a new ideal of a democratic state.

"It has been ordained by the Merciful Lord, that no one should dominate over others, that none should cause pain to another. Only then can the world abide in peace. Such is the provision of the Lord's Benevolence."

SGGS, p. 74

Guru Granth Sahib addresses itself to the common man and not to an ascetic. It brought religion out of the cloister, and related it to the living realities of life. Toynbee calls it, "Mankind's common Spiritual Treasure." Dr Kirpal Singh says that Adi Granth is the only scripture in the world, written by Sikh prophets, and compiled and edited by the Guru personally.

Some writers speak of 'the post-Guru period' — Sikhs do not acknowledge this position, because the seat of gurudom was passed on to *Shabadguru* by the Tenth Master. Guru Granth Sahib is the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

"It must be mentioned that by the time of Guru Gobind Singh two Sikh gurus — Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur had become martyrs at the hands of the Delhi rulers, but, for that reason, Guru Gobind Singh, the final editor of Guru Granth Sahib, did not opt to edit away the hymns of Muslim saints like Sheikh Farid, Bhikan or Kabir from the Sikh Scripture. The Hindu *Rajas* of Himachal and Brahmin orthodoxy had also developed a sort of anipathy towards Sikhism. Again, for that reason, the Guru never thought of omitting Hindu saints from the Granth, in his magnanimity. He was true to the spirit of religious harmony", says Dr Muthumohan.

3. GURDWARAS

A gurdwara is Sikhism's house of prayer. The concept of gurdwara is attributed to Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru. Prior to this, there used to be *dharamsalas*. It is an indestructible symbol of Sikh faith. A step towards building a permanent fountainhead of Sikh faith was taken by the fifth guru, Guru Arjun Dev, even though the site was selected by Guru Ram Das, who built a mud hut in Amritsar. Ultimately, the Golden Temple was built here and it became the core of Sikh faith from which Sikhs down the ages could draw sustenance. In 1604, Guru Granth Sahib was installed with utmost reverence in *Harimandar Sahib* — thus, a divine pivot was provided around which Sikh lives would revolve. A gurdwara exemplifies the Sikh people's commitment to the Gurus' teachings.

The foremost point to bear in mind is, that all gurdwaras, the world over, are the home of Guru Granth Sahib, the *Shabadguru* or the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, as such, they in actual fact belong to the Guru Panth. The purpose of each gurdwara is to cater to the multifarious needs of the community in their respective geographical areas. They are to practise and preach Sikh religion. Gurdwaras throughout the world are connected with this unity of purpose. They follow the Gurus' *Rahit Maryada* notified by the SGPC.

Literally, gurdwara means door, portal or home of the Guru. Every gurdwara is expected to have a prayer hall, a refectory and room(s) for visitors. Guru Arjun built the Golden Temple with doors on all four sides, this means it is open to all four castes. Sikhism does not have any established priestly class to run the gurdwaras, which, in fact, are run by the elders of the Panth, much like the Church of

Scotland, which is managed by the congregation. The Sikh gurdwara provides cohesion to the Sikh Panth. Anybody, man, woman or youngster, can lead the prayer.

4. KHALSA PANTH

The word Khalsa is of Arabic origin which means absolutely pure. According to Prof. Puran Singh, this ideal group (Khalsa Panth) had been the dream of Guru Nanak, and was planted in the garden of Anandpur Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh.

Khalsa was designed to be an army of saint-soldiers, pure and fearless, in the service of the Creator and His creation. In this fraternity of God's army, there were to be none more equal than the others. Each man was part of an organic whole. The Code of Conduct applied to all, including the Guru himself — who remained subject to, and answerable to the Khalsa Panth.

"It was a brotherhood of knights of honour". The inspired personality of the brotherhood was love-strung, song-strung, fearless, death-despising and even death-courting. They sought no rewards, and were always in readiness for service to the Guru, wishing well to the whole creation — desiring nothing but God's name. The Khalsa went to war, whenever it was the need of the hour, with no anger, hatred or rancour — like a law enforcing agency, supposed to take corrective action. A spiritual and psychological regeneration was brought about by a strict Code of Conduct known as *Rahit Maryada*, lived by the entire body of the Khalsa.

Guru Gobind Singh cut the gordian knot in one stroke by cleansing the mind of the Khalsa of all dehumanising restrictions of past value systems. He cut all fetters of an enslaved society, the day he administered *Pahul* (*amrit*). The initiation of the double-edged sword to the *Panj Piaras*, was subsequently given to the entire body of the Khalsa. That day, he gave them the Five Freedoms. Freedom from *Varan Ashram* (*Dharam Nash*), Freedom from *Karam Kand* (*Karam Nash*), Freedom from all superstitions (*Bharam Nash*), Freedom from lineage barriers (*Kul Nash*), and Freedom from occupational restrictions (*Kirt Nash*). This dispelled from the Khalsa, for all time, all distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, and teacher and taught. Every man became *Singh* and every woman *Kaur*, thus, all castes were

shed.

The Khalsa was trained to react against wrong, injustice and oppression. A society was created with the ideal of *sant-sipahi* (saint-soldier). "Born into tribulation and nurtured in persecution, the Khalsa triumphs — *Raj Karega Khalsa*". The Khalsa Panth has been a great cohesive force of the Sikh community.

The metamorphosis has been accomplished in defiance of the rigid prejudices and conservatism of the old Hindu religious systems. Prior to the time of the Sikh Gurus, no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men who were believed to be unclean and polluted from their birth, but the watchword and war-cry of the Sikhs "*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*, and the stimulating precept of the Tenth Guru, altered what hitherto had been deemed the dregs of humanity, into warriors whose prowess and loyalty never failed their leaders". (M.A. Macauliffe, 'The Sikh Religion', Vol. V, pp. 99-100.)

5. GURMATTÀ

Of all the Sikh institutions built for the progress of the community, this institution reached the highest water-mark. It not only bridged the status of the Guru and the Sikh, but also gave a position of eminence to the Khalsa, to guide the community in all matters by consensus.

"*Gurmattā* is the symbol of the collective will of the *Sarbat* Khalsa duly formulated. It has the whole community's backing, since it is taken in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. Its rejection was considered a sacrilege." This institution gave continuity of the Guru's will along with the capacity to adjust to the changing needs of the Sikhs. During the *Misl* period of Sikh history as reported, "The Sikh Chiefs would sit closely together and say to each other, 'the sacred Granth Sahib is between us, let us swear by our Scripture to forget all internal disputes and be united'. Thus many critical situations were avoided. When the Sikhs were struggling, wherever they went, Guru Granth Sahib was their moving church and country, and also the pivot of their patriotism."

"*Gurmattā* is a political institution with an ethical base". It has been described by historians and other observers as "the Grand con-

vention", "the General Assembly". It was all these things put together, and more. In order to fully understand the *gurmatta*, we must look into the spirit that inspired it.

The genesis of the *gurmatta* is found in the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru had laid down that all Sikhs were equal, and that every Sikh was an integral part of the Khalsa Panth. He had further stated that when the Khalsa assembled, the Guru be deemed present among them. He also ordained that the Khalsa, of which the Guru was a part, was higher than the Guru himself. This combined will of the Khalsa was thus supreme in religious and temporal matters. *Gurmatta* is the combined will of the Khalsa Panth.

The Panthic *gurmatta* was not a thing of everyday occurrence. It was resorted to only when supreme danger was threatening the purity of religion from within, or from a joint enemy from without. It was another safeguard inherent in the constitution of the Khalsa.

The *gurmatta* was helpful in avoiding deadlocks — no resolution could be put before a meeting of the Khalsa, unless as a preliminary condition, a solemn assurance was given that the leaders were one with the Guru. Then the *jathedar* (of *Akal Takht*) could declare that the Khalsa was one with the Guru, and, therefore, he would put the *gurmatta* before them for discussion. The majority view was carried by unanimous consensus always. It gave a position of eminence to the Khalsa. It developed into an important political institution to determine by consensus the general will of the community — thus it preserved unity and cohesion. The potency of the *gurmatta* lay in the belief that the ultimate authority within the Panth had been retained by the eternal Guru, whose presence at the meeting was symbolized by the sacred Scripture. Sanction attached to it was stronger than any *Misl* or combination of *Misls*.

The first *gurmatta* was taken by the Five Beloved (*Panj Piaras*) at Chamkaur Sahib, in 1704. They ordered Guru Gobind Singh to leave the fort in the interest of the Khalsa. It was this unified action which led to the establishment of the Sikh empire. Relations with foreign powers and treaties in the 18th century were signed after taking a *gurmatta*. The last political *gurmatta* was held in 1809.

While Rousseau's 'General Will' remained in the realm of ar

unrealized dream, the *gurmatta* of the Guru Khalsa is a working institution. It is the religious fervour of the Sikhs which makes this possible, all decisions are taken in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib — giving it a moral and spiritual thrust, thus a head start. All deliberations are in the general interest of the community. This is the two-fold leadership of the Sikh community — Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Panth.

CONCLUSION

We have gone into the creation and working of the five premier Sikh institutions, and seen how they have given strength and direction to the community for the last five centuries, and how they helped it to face and overcome a number of critical situations. With a sound value system, they stood the test of time — they were vital, resilient and upward looking. Each merge, support and supplement the others, thus creating a perfect blend — to cater to the whole-life system of the community. This is the inheritance of the Khalsa from their Gurus.

A number of practices discarded by the Gurus are raising their heads in the Sikh community. Caste-divisions, superstitions and money culture, all these do not belong to Sikhism. The leaders at all levels, spiritual, political and intellectual, must function within the ambit of our institutions. Any digression from such a dynamic value system will be retrograde. "It is clear that Sikhism has come out of 20th century unscathed. It is equally clear that it will be entering the 21st century and the centuries to come, on a surer footing".

The Sikh youth has proved its mettle, they have shown no dearth of bravery and sacrifices, they resisted much and suffered much during the last decade. It is important that they remain rooted to their institutional value system, and not lose their moorings. They must be able to stand out among millions, unafraid, and maintaining their distinct identity among the multitudes, with pride in their pristine glory and traditions.

SIKH GURDWARAS IN HISTORY AND ROLE OF JATHEDAR KARTAR SINGH JHABBAR

Karnail Singh

The sad romantic aura of the Sikh gurdwaras' long history continues to prevail in the Sikh psyche, for it is a vital link in the story of the country on the line of invasion and the people — a race nurtured in storm.¹ In order to fully grasp the ethos of their tale, we have to study the Indian history of the past 500 years when a unique mystic prophet, Guru Nanak, and his nine successor gurus (1469-1708), in pursuit of creating a nation of self-respecting people out of a down-trodden and humiliated society, set the heights around them ablaze with noble and enduring lessons of valour and piety. They grappled with destiny, and their deeds of daring dazzle history. Such is the example which nations need to electrify them.²

SIKH GURDWARAS AND HARIMANDAR

According to Shamsheer Singh Ashok, 'The first ever Sikh *dharamsala* (gurdwara) established by Guru Nanak, was the residence of Sajjan *thag* at village Makhdoompur in Multan area (Pakistan), which still exists in its original form. Thereafter, wherever the Guru went during his long travels throughout India, Sri Lanka, Middle East, Afghanistan and Tibet, he made *dharamsalas* where people who accepted his religious principles would meet and sing God's praises.'³ During the period of the first three gurus (1469-1574), a large number of people in India and abroad had embraced the new faith, which called for a central place of worship. Accordingly, under guidance of the third guru, Guru Amar Das, Bhai Jetha, later Guru Ram Das, assisted by experienced and devoted Sikhs like Baba Budha and others began excavation of two tanks, *Santokh Sar* and *Amrit Sarowar* at Chak Guru, later Amritsar, and completed the work by 1577. The tanks, however, remained kacha until the fifth guru, Guru Arjun, ascended the *gurgaddi* in 1581.⁴ By 1604, Harimandar (Golden Temple) was built in the middle of *Amrit Sarowar*, and Guru Granth Sahib, since compiled, was

installed therein. Soon grew, around this nucleus, several bazaars and residential quarters where traders, artisans, builders, labourers and devotees began to reside. The entire Sikh people looked upon this centre as the body and soul of their new faith. They began to pay homage to the Guru and the Harimandar, and made liberal offerings for further constructions and to the common kitchen. This central temple and Guru Granth Sahib gave Sikhism the shape of a regular church.

The ever increasing importance and popularity of the new faith excited suspicion in the mind of Emperor Jahangir, who considered it dangerous to the state and to his own faith, Islam. In his autobiography, he records, "A Hindu, Arjun by name, lived.... in the garb of a *pir* and *sheikh*, and had captivated the hearts of simple-minded Hindus and stupid Muslims.... They called him Guru, and from all directions fools were attracted towards him.... For years the thought had been occurring to me that I should either put an end to this false traffic or that he should be brought into the fold of Islam.... I ordered that he be put to death with tortures and that his property be confiscated".⁵ "Guru Arjun's last injunction to his 11 years old son, Har-gobind, was to sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability".⁶

AKAL TAKHT

Accordingly, on ascending the *gurgaddi*, he called upon his followers to come to him with weapons and horses. Thus began to be assembled a sizable force at his command for service in defence of *Dharma* and protection of the weaker sections of society against oppression whether from state or individual. He built the Akal Takht just in front of Harimandar. The Guru attended the morning religious service in the shrine, and held open *darbar* in the afternoon at Akal Takht, where discussions took place for strengthening the faith, besides redressal of public grievances by the Guru. Also, musicians and *dhadis* sang melodious *vars* and ballads of heroes of yore which thrilled the young and old. "This blending of the religious sovereignty and worldly supremacy in the presence of the Guru, viz., the concept of *miri-piri* in the Sikh tradition since Guru Nanak, was thus resoundingly re-affirmed".^{6a} Guru Hargobind had to fight four defensive battles between 1628-1634. Thereafter, he decided to reside at Kiratpur, away from the

local centres of state power. The management of Harimandar and other gurdwaras then passed on to the Minas, descendants of Pirthia, elder brother of Guru Arjun, and remained with them and others till 1699.

MOST DIFFICULT PHASE AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS

During this period, "The Sikhs of Amritsar were greatly agitated at the deterioration of services at Harimandar. They approached Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib in 1699 and apprised him of the prevailing state of affairs. The Guru deputed Bhai Mani Singh, with five devoted Sikhs, to take charge of the Harimandar, Akal Takht and other gurdwaras".⁷ Bhai Mani Singh performed this difficult task in accordance with the Sikh religious principles till his martyrdom in 1734, first with the help of baptized Sikhs and later with the assistance of *Udasi sadhus*, when state oppression against the faith reached its extremes. During the dark half century (1716-65), "political decisions of Sikhs were generally governed by the needs of Harimandar".⁸ Religious functions were, then, performed by the *Udasi sadhus*, while the responsibility to protect the shrine fell on a handful of devout Sikhs. Besides two general massacres of Sikhs (*ghatugharas*) in 1746 and 1762, Harimandar was desecrated several times by the state officials and was completely demolished thrice with gun powder, and the holy tank filled up with the debris of buildings and bodies of slaughtered men and cows by the mighty Abdali in 1757, 1762 and 1764. History still stands amazed at the deeds of valour and sacrifices of Sikh saint-soldiers in defence of *Dharam* and the motherland, who not only avenged the desecration of their shrines, rebuilt Harimandar after every demolition with greater vigour, but also captured Lahore in 1765, struck the coin in the Guru's name, conquered vast portions of Punjab by 1799, (upto Multan during the life of Abdali who died in 1772), when the legendary Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with amazing astuteness and daring, established the Sikh Empire comprising Punjab, Sind, Kashmir, Ladhakh, Baluchistan and Tibet.

During their ascendancy 1765-1849, the Sikh *Misl Sardars* and Maharaja Ranjit Singh built new gurdwaras at places of important events and those visited by the Gurus throughout India. They sanctioned liberal *jagirs* and grants for further constructions, their improvements and for the common kitchen, which catered to the needs

of pilgrims and others. Throughout the *misl* period 1765-1799, Harimandar and Akal Takht remained the rallying point of Sikh religion and politics. They held *Sarbat Khalsa*, took all important decisions at Akal Takht, and initiated the newcomers to the fold of Khalsa.

BUNGAS

The *Misl Sardars* were greatly interested in promoting learning and literature. They granted *jagirs*, stipends and allowances to scholars and *bungas*. Between 1765 and 1833, 74 *bungas* were built around the Harimandar. The primary objective of their construction was to provide the central shrine a ready line of defence. The chiefs of prominent *misls* were asked to keep their *jathas* in a state of readiness for any emergency. *Bungas* were also used for accommodation of pilgrims and travellers. They became seats of learning and of fine arts as well. For instance Kapurthala Bunga was famous for interpretation/commentaries on Guru Granth Sahib and training of *ragis*, *rababis* and *dhadis*. The Kaithalwala Bunga was known as 'Bunga of Gianis'. Giani Sant Singh, Head Priest of Harimandar, during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's period, and Mahakavi Bhai Santokh Singh of '*Suraj Parkash*' fame were the product of this *bunga*. Shaheed Rattan Singh Bhangu, the first ever Sikh historian, author of '*Prachin Panth Parkash*' was thrown up by Bunga Sham Singh. Teaching of Sanskrit, Gurmukhi, Medicine, Calligraphy and other fine arts, was imparted there for about 200 years. Akal Bunga was of great eminence. According to Doctor Leitner, the first principal of Oriental College, Lahore, there were five Gurmukhi schools and three Sanskrit *pathshalas* in these *bungas*. No fees were charged from the students. On the contrary, free boarding and lodging was provided. The total expenses were met by the concerned Chiefs and *Sardars*.

"These *bungas* could be categorized as: (a) *misl bungas*, (b) personal *bungas*, (c) community *bungas* and (d) ecclesiastical *bungas*. These were named after the name of *Misl Sardars* who built them, and were considered panthic property since their very inception. In view of their great contribution to the strengthening of Sikh faith in the matter of teaching *Gurbani*, in providing security to the holy precincts, and in their being places of great learning and culture, the words, '*Jhanda Bunge Jugo Jug Atal*' (may the Sikh flag and *bungas* prevail for ever)

were included in the daily Sikh Ardas".⁹

In 1765, Amritsar was jointly ruled by the Sikh *Misl Sardars*. After reconstruction of Harimandar and cleaning of the holy tank, services in the Harimandar were reorganized. Gopal Das Udasi was still the *Granthi* there. He neglected his duties and misappropriated funds. Besides, he was a clean shaved *Udasi* and wore a cap. With the consent of the *sangat*, therefore, he was removed and a baptized devout Sikh, Chanchal Singh, was appointed in his place. Maharaja Ranjit Singh showed exemplary devotion in the service of his faith and Harimandar'. Immediately after his occupation of Amritsar, he gifted the income from the city octroi to Harimandar, and granted liberal *jagir* for the community kitchen. Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, a chief of great genius and piety, was put incharge of Harimandar, and Giani Sant Singh, an erudite scholar in *Gurbani*, was appointed Head *Granthi*. The number of persons associated with services in Harimandar and its management was between 500-600. Construction of new *bungas* was taken up for pilgrims besides one for his own use. He built additional buildings in the holy precincts. For services in gold and marble, he donated rupees 16 *lakhs*, and it was after covering of the Harimandar with gold leaf that it got the popular name of Golden Temple. The best artists available were employed for *naqqashi*. Revenue free lands worth over a *lakh* of rupees a year were granted to various office holders in the Harimandar. He donated to Harimandar several pieces of rare art and of high cost such as a canopy embedded with gold and studded with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls, a bejewelled headband worth millions of rupees, another canopy equally precious, and a sword with a gold handle studded with jewels and pearls. According to the court historian, Sohan Lal Suri, the Maharaja had even willed that after his death his personal horses, about twelve hundred, be sent to Harimandar. The Maharaja would generally attend Baisakhi, Diwali and Dusehra festivals at Harimandar, besides *amawas* and *sankrat* days of every month. He would invariably visit Harimandar after every successful campaign throughout his life and make large gifts and offerings to all important gurdwaras.¹⁰

Ruchi Ram Sahni records, "By the time of death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the *pujaris* of gurdwaras had become negligent in their duties due to the indifference of *Dogra* ministers, and certain undue changes crept into the previous system of *Gurmat*".¹¹

GURDWARAS DURING BRITISH PERIOD

With the fraudulent British occupation of Punjab in 1849, a new era of misfortunes, sufferings, humiliations and distortions of religion, culture and history of Sikhs began. Lord Dalhousie, then Governor General of India, in a private letter wrote, "Our actions require no explanation. If the Sikhs, after this (second Anglo-Sikh war) is over, rise again, they shall intrench themselves behind a dunghill and fight with their finger-nails, for if I live twelve months, they shall have nothing else left to fight with".¹² K.C. Yadav records, "The Board of Administration of Punjab at the very outset, took in hand the work of suppression and coercion of the war-like Sikhs.... The first target of suppression was the 11 years old Maharaja Dalip Singh who was made to resign for himself, his heirs and his successors, all rights, title and claim to the sovereignty of the Punjab. The vast state properties, including some world famous marvels, were confiscated... Maharani Jindan, mother of the deposed Maharaja, was exiled, interned at Banaras and later at Chinara Fort... The Governor General directed that Chiefs and fief holders should be effectively deprived of the power to do mischief.... It was the Sikh soldiery that the British dreaded the most. Immediately on annexation, 50,000 of them were disbanded... All classes of people other than Europeans were prohibited from keeping arms. In a short period, 1,20,000 arms of different kinds were seized.... The British not only destroyed the royal house of the Sikhs and ruined their nobility but also their social organizations such as village *panchayats*... They further ruined their economic prosperity by removal of soldiers and civil servants and the consequent unemployment. The new revenue system pauperized the peasantry".

He adds, "There was an attack on the Sikh religion too. Christian Missions were established in Punjab as a thanks-giving to Almighty God for victory against a terrible foe. Then began a direct attempt of converting Sikhs to Christianity. In July 1852, the first conversion of a Sikh took place in the vicinity of Golden Temple itself. In 1853, Maharaja Dalip Singh was converted. It was in keeping with the policy set out to convert the entire Sikh population. Opinions by high British officers were openly expressed to destroy the Golden Temple, for it could become the centre of hope and aspirations of a great people, and may some day prove the rallying point for the Sikhs. An anonymous writer wrote in the *Calcutta Review* in 1859, "Leave it

(Golden Temple)... to itself and withdraw from it the patronage of the state; resume the lands set aside for it... and the splendour of the institution will pass away. The gilded dome will lose its lustre, the marble walls fall out of its repair... to act thus would be to act impartially and in accordance with true principles of non-interference". As a matter of policy, the spirit of the Khalsa was intended to be killed. Their language, traditions, manners and customs were suppressed. The Administrative Report (1849-51) said, "The Sikh faith and ecclesiastical policy is rapidly going where the Sikh political ascendancy has already gone. These men joined Sikhism in thousands and they now desert in equal numbers. Gurmukhi is rapidly falling into desuetude. The Punjabi as a spoken language is also losing its currency and degenerating into a mere rustic dialogue."¹³ G.S. Dhillon very aptly writes, "The Waqf Act of 1861 gave the control and management of the holy places of the Hindus and Muslims to the communities concerned, but in the case of Sikh gurdwaras the Act was not applied on political grounds. The properties of Sikh places of worship were transferred and given over to the *Udasi mahants* and others, throughout the Punjab. A significant blow was given by the British to the Sikh religion, when they conferred proprietary rights to the temple *mahants*, *Brahmins*, *Udasis* or *Nirmalas*, most of whom had Hindu leanings, and hardly understood or had faith in the Sikh religion and its practices. This was an extremely subtle method by which the British sought to secure the undoing of the ideological base of the Sikhs".

He adds, "The Government wanted to maintain the gurdwaras as channels of indirect control of Sikhs". He concluded, "There were two aspects of British policy towards Sikhs. First, their political suppression, second, their ideological erosion by a studied patronage of Hinduised *mahants* and *pujaris* through government nominated managers of their shrines".¹⁴

There was even a proposal under government consideration to either sell or mortgage the entire Golden Temple Complex including Akal Takht to a non-Sikh, so that under law of possession and ownership, the Sikhs could be permanently deprived of their most sacred shrines. When a deputation of eminent Sikhs was told by the Viceroy that the government was legally competent to do so, the Sikhs in their utter helplessness could think of no other means than to initiate an *Akhand Path* in Harimandar and offer *Ardas* that Guru Ram Das

himself come to their succour. Accordingly, an *Akhand Path* was started on April 20, 1877, and when the *sangat* was listening to *Asa-Di-Var Kirtan* at 4.30 a.m., a balloon like flashing light entered Harimandar through the northern door, stood before Guru Granth Sahib for a while and then went out through the southern door, and, passing over the holy tank, ascended toward the sky and disappeared. Hundreds of devotees made their obeisance in thankfulness to the Guru, and felt reassured that no earthly power could desecrate the holy shrine. After this revelation, the temple authorities recorded the incident on a plate of bronze, which still remains hung on the entrance door of Harimandar. It was after receiving intelligence reports from its agents who were present in the Harimandar, that the Government gave up its wicked plan.^{14a}

Thus beleaguered, the Sikhs were smarting and smouldering, but felt helpless against the Government. "By an order of the Governor General, the control of the Golden Temple was entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar in 1859 with no rules for management laid down. The internal matters of the shrine were left to be dealt with by the priests. The Temple had an annual income of several *lakhs* of rupees. The *pujaris*, *mahants*, *ragis* and other functionaries received customary share of the offerings, and asserted proprietary rights over the landed properties of the shrine. This created dissensions, and soon there was a formidable list of disputes going on in courts among them".¹⁵

On a large number of complaints by the Sikhs to the Deputy Commissioner against this mis-management, he formed a committee of prominent Sikhs who framed a *Dastur-ul-Amal* for carrying out services in the Temple. But this failed to bring any improvement. The internal affairs of the shrine remained in the hands of *mahants* and *pujaris*, who after the loss of political power by Sikhs, lost all fear of *sangat*, neglected their duties and indulged in malpractices. By 1883, this committee of the Sikhs became defunct and a *sarbrah* began to be appointed by the Deputy Commissioner who was made responsible for the entire administration of the Temple. They were selfish people and Government stooges. "In the meantime, some Hindu priests were ushered in, which resulted in observance of non-Sikh services. Even some idols were installed in the *parkarna*, and areas around it began to be used for commercial purposes. Unscrupulous persons began to

sell pornographic literature there, and scenes of moral degradation became routine practice. This extremely disgusting management remained in force till 1920 inspite of several efforts by the devout Sikhs and their sympathisers to improve matters".¹⁶ This unfortunate atmosphere was prevalent in all the major gurdwaras, for it was in keeping with the policy of the Government.

G.S. Dhillon again succinctly observes, "Under the circumstances, chances of a successful political battle against the British being slim, the Sikhs considered it essential to strengthen their religious base which was the source of their zeal and vigour. Accordingly, Singh Sabha, a social-religious movement was launched in 1873 for this purpose by educating Sikhs in their religion and traditions. By 1882, entire Punjab, rural as well as urban, was covered by establishing Singh Sabhas. Having discretely reconstructed these aspects of Sikh society slowly and surely, the Singh Sabha Movement took up the political problems as well. With the formation of *Chief Khalsa Diwan* in 1902, there came a significant change in the attitude of Singh Sabha leaders towards politics. They took upon themselves to safeguard the political rights of the Sikhs".¹⁷

Between the years 1902 and 1920, there were several occasions of political conflict between the Government and the Sikhs, such as the Colonisation Bill of 1907, the management of Khalsa College, Amritsar, the Komagata Maru episode of 1914, the Gadar and Non-cooperation Movements and the Rowlat Act agitation resulting in the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, and the imposition of martial law in the Punjab in 1919, etc., etc. "Matters, however, came to a head in 1912 in the field of gurdwara reforms, when in building the new capital, the Government of India acquired gurdwara land and demolished an old boundary wall of Rakab Ganj in Delhi. The Sikhs seized this opportunity to challenge the *mahant's* right to alienate the Gurdwara property, and threatened to launch a *morcha*, but this had to be postponed because of the First World War".¹⁸ The matter was again taken up when Sardul Singh Caveeshar issued an appeal in the 'Akali' of Lahore of Sept. 2, 1920, "Wanted hundred martyrs to save gurdwaras". Within a fortnight, seven hundred offers were received.¹⁹ It was then decided by the Central Sikh League to send volunteers to take forcible possession of the Rakab Ganj land. The Government realising the gravity of the situation, restored the acquired land to a

hastily formed body of Delhi Sikhs, declared to rebuild the 322 feet long demolished wall before Sardul Singh Caveeshar and volunteers reached Delhi, and thus avoided open confrontation with the Sikhs. Though the Government was able to stall this movement by its timely action, the Sikhs were now soon to storm the bastions which the *Raj* had so strenuously sought to protect.

JATHEDAR KARTAR SINGH JHABBAR

Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar (1874-1962) was the grandson of Sardar Mangal Singh whom Sardar Maha Singh Sukherchak twice failed to subdue. Later Maharaja Ranjit Singh compromised with the Jhabbars and appointed Sardar Mangal Singh as *Kurnedan* in his forces.²⁰ Jhabbar had little education, but had noble inclinations and a healthy mind in a healthy body. He would attend religious gatherings along with his friends and listen to *Gurbani* and political speeches. With three years of training in a *Vidyalaya* in *Gurbani* and Sikh tradition, he himself became a preacher of no small merit. In 1912, he established — *Khalsa Diwan, Khara Sauda, Bar* and a large number of Singh Sabhas in the new colonies of Lyallpur and Sheikhupur districts. During the stormy days of Martial Law in 1919, he was sentenced to be hanged with six others of his area being a ring leader for political reasons, although he had been ceaselessly helping the victims of hooliganism during the disturbances. Death penalty was later commuted to transportation for life.²¹ During his one year of jail in Andaman islands, he became an associate of such eminent patriots as Savarkar brothers, Bhai Parmanand, Baba Nidhan Singh Chuga, Udham Singh Kesale of Tosha Maru fame, and others. This further sharpened his consciousness of India's political slavery and misuse of the Sikh holy shrines, and he plunged headlong into the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the independence struggle, when as a result of general amnesty, he returned to Punjab in 1920.²²

GURDWARA BABE-DI-BER

On account of mis-management in Babe Di Ber gurdwara, Sialkot, local devout Sikhs sought the help of the *Central Majha Diwan*, Tarn Taran, to improve it. A *jatha* of 50 volunteers went there, who soon realised that more volunteers were needed. Jhabbar with 300 of his men reached Sialkot and in spite of tough opposition by the local Hindus, took possession of the gurdwara and its assets, constituted a

local managing committee under Baba Kharak Singh, and came back. This happened in early October 1920.

HARIMANDAR AND AKAL TAKHT

On their way back, when Jhabbar and his companions went to Harimandar, they learnt that the *pujaris* were refusing to accept *parshad* brought by the Khalsa *baradari* of Ravidasia Sikhs, although members of Chief Khalsa Diwan and some Sikh Professors of Khalsa College, Amritsar, were persuading them to do so. Then, Jhabbar forcefully entered into discussion with the *pujaris* and asked them to show any scriptural evidence for their refusal and whether the gurdwaras were their ancestral property. He told them in no uncertain terms that the Sikh Panth was the real custodian of these holy shrines and that they were mere employees. He warned them to act according to the wishes of the *sangat* or else they would be thrown out. He also suggested to have the guidance from Guru Granth Sahib in the matter, which the *pujaris* agreed to. When Guru Granth Sahib was opened at random, the following verse was taken as the Guru's *Hukam*:

ਸੋਰਿਠ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ਦੁਤਕੀ ॥

ਨਿਗੁਣਿਆ ਨੇ ਆਪੇ ਬਖਸਿ ਲਏ ਭਾਈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਇ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਤਮ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਰਾਮਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥੧॥

ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਆਪੇ ਬਖਸਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

ਗੁਣਗੀਣ ਹਮ ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ਭਾਈ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਲਏ ਰਲਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥²³

At this revelation, it was agreed that the *parshad* by the Khalsa *baradari* be distributed among the *sangat*, but Jhabbar insisted that the distribution of *parshad* should begin with the *pujaris* who were managing the Shrine. Some of the *pujaris* declined and walked away. Jhabbar then announced to the *sangat* that the ceremony of *parshad* by the Ravidasia Sikhs would also be repeated at Akal Takht immediately thereafter. On learning this, the *pujaris* of Akal Takht left the place and went to their homes. In this manner, possession of Harimandar and Akal Takht was taken by the Sikhs from the *pujaris* and *mahants* on October 12, 1920.

At the Akal Takht congregation, Jhabbar made a spirited speech and asked for such volunteers as were ready to face even death, transportation for life and confiscation of property for sanctity of the Shrine. Out of a *sangat* of about 8,000, only 18 persons including

Jhabbar himself came forward. They were constituted into a managing board of the Shrine, and Teja Singh Bhuchar was appointed *jathedar* of Akal Takht. Next day, the *pujaris* tried to take possession of the holy premises through hooligans of the city, but failed in the face of the determined opposition by the management board and their associates.

On October 13, 1920, the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, summoned Jhabbar and his associates to his residence. He informed them of the Governor's written orders to hand over the holy complex to a properly constituted committee, for, it was a religious matter of the Sikhs, and the Government did not desire to interfere in it in any manner. On the Deputy Commissioner's asking, a temporary committee of nine members was formed there and then, to whom he gave the possession of Harimandar and Akal Takht in writing.²⁴ On November 13, the Punjab Government, in consultation with Maharaja Patiala, constituted a committee of 36-all reformers, with power to co-opt others, to manage the Golden Temple and all gurdwaras in Punjab and other parts of India.^{24a} On a *hukamnama*, a congregation comprising more than 10,000 people assembled at Akal Takht on November 15, 1920. A Management body of 175 baptised Sikhs including the 36 appointed by Government, named as Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), was formed unanimously, and Sir Sundar Singh Majithia selected as its first president.²⁵ Members were also co-opted to represent Sikh States and Sikh Bodies in Burma, Malaya, China and America.^{25a}

CENTRAL SIKH LEAGUE

A meeting of the Central Sikh League was to take place at Lahore on October 18 to 20, 1920, which was to be addressed by Mahatma Gandhi, who had launched a Non-cooperation Movement against the Government. It was apprehended that the Sikhs might as well join it. The Governor of the Punjab, therefore, sent Executive Counsellor, Sardar Gopal Singh Bhagowalia, to meet Jhabbar and to inform him that Sikhs' political demands such as Gurdwara Reforms, removal of ban on *kirpan*, 33% seats for the Sikhs in the Provincial Assembly, release of political prisoners, etc., would be met by the Government, if the Sikh League refrained from passing the Non-cooperation resolution.²⁶ Jhabbar, in his two hours speech in the Sikh League meeting, forcefully pleaded that Sikhs must make maximum

sacrifices for the country's freedom, but should not join the Congress until it guaranteed to safeguard their political rights. Mahatma Gandhi, during his address, advised Sikhs not to turn out *mahants* from gurdwaras, for it implied use of force and exhorted them to take up Congress work with greater vigour.²⁷ As the meeting arrangement was in the hands of pro-Congress elements in the Sikh League, Non-cooperation resolution was passed.

GURDWARA PANJA SAHIB

Mahant Mitha Singh of Panja Sahib gurdwara had given contract to a Hindu grocer, who along with *karah parshad* for offering in the shrine, also sold tobacco items, and himself often smoked. An army man, on seeing the *karah parshad* arrangement, had an argument with the contractor, refused to buy *parshad* from him and went inside the gurdwara to pay homage to Guru Granth Sahib. The *mahant*, on hearing this, showed no regrets, and instead his brother seriously wounded the army man with a gun shot. The incident became a hot subject matter of news letters far and wide. By this time, possession of Harimandar and Akal Takht had been recently taken by the Sikhs. Afraid of the publicity against him by this news, the *mahant* came to Amritsar to see for himself how the new arrangements of the gurdwaras worked. When he saw the tall and sturdy *Central Majha Diwan* volunteers in blue uniforms, with drawn *kirpans* and steel quoits over their heads, guarding the shrines, he was so terrified that he immediately went back, lost his mental balance and died within two days in spite of medical help. A telegram was received at Amritsar from the *granthi* of Cambelpur Singh Sabha, "Mahant Mitha Singh died. Send *jatha* urgently". The matter was discussed in the Amritsar Gurdwara Committee. Pro-Congress Sikhs argued that Gandhi thought that the British would be leaving India in less than a year's time, and taking possession of gurdwaras could wait till then.²⁸ Jhabbar thought that freedom would not come that soon, and in case it did, the task of taking possession of shrines from *mahants* with Hindu leanings would not only be difficult but totally impossible.²⁹ It was decided that Jhabbar with 25 devout Sikhs should go and take possession of the shrine. The *jatha* reached Panja Sahib on November 19, 1920, and walked in fours in military manner to the gurdwara. The *jatha* remained there for the next 20 days. The daily ups and downs of the situation they had to pass

through, cannot be explained in detail except to say that at times there was stiff opposition by the local Hindu majority population often spearheaded by hooligans and the paid ruffians of the *mahant*, and as a last resort, by hundreds of Hindu women who entered and stayed in the gurdwara premises for a day and night. They made vile attempts to make the situation violent, but Jhabbar's matchless devotion to the Panthic cause, his tenacity, courage, tact and manly behaviour, coupled, of course, with the assistance of local Sikhs, who had begun to arrive there from the adjoining districts, saved the situation from growing worse. Jhabbar had been sending a daily report to Amritsar on the situation. By this time, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* dignitaries, such as Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Sardar Harbans Singh Attari and others were working in complete co-operation with the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. It so happened that on the day when Chaudhary Sultan Ahmad, the local Deputy Commissioner, accompanied by the British Superintendent of Police, arrived at the scene to see the situation, Jhabbar received two telegrams, one from Sir Majithia, and the other from Sardar Harbans Singh Attari, asking him if he required more volunteers or funds, and that in case any officer came at the spot, the telegrams be shown to them.³⁰ On perusal of the telegraphic message, the Deputy Commissioner ordered the arrest of the deceased *mahant's* brother and warned the Hindus against entry in the gurdwara. Earlier, when the Superintendent of Police enquired from Jhabbar with whose authority he had taken possession of the shrine, he replied that the shrine being Sikhs' religious heritage, he needed no authority from any quarters to occupy it. Now that the local officers had settled the affair in favour of the Sikhs, a grand congregation was summoned at Panja Sahib. Sikhs from all over the western Punjab, North West Frontier Province and some leaders from Amritsar attended. A management committee for the gurdwara was selected from among them. While Jhabbar with his *jatha* and the Sikh leaders returned to Amritsar, Jathedar Bhuchar with another *jatha* returned after taking over control of Bhai Joga Singh Gurdwara at Peshawar as well.³¹

AKALI JATHA KHARA SAUDA, BAR

Keeping in view the future Panthic requirements of the area, a Sikh congregation was held at Gurdwara Maharani Nikain, Sheikhpura, on December 24, 1920 and an Akali *jatha*, *Khara Sauda*, Bar,

was formed and Jhabbar unanimously appointed its President.

On December 26, 1920, Jhabbar entered Gurdwara *Sacha Sauda* with his *jatha*. They summoned the *mahant*, and brought home to him the non-Sikh *maryada* in the shrine, his personal vices and immoral acts, which he confessed. Thereafter, they assumed control of the gurdwara and provided maintenance for his family out of the gurdwara funds.³²

GURDWARA TARN TARAN

On January 26, 1921, a deputation of Sikhs came to a *diwan* at Akal Takht, and related woeful tales of immorality and non-Sikh rituals performed in the gurdwara at Tarn Taran. At the end, they made a pathetic appeal that they be saved by the Khalsa from that wretched situation like the *Brahmin*, whose wife had been snatched away by the *Pathan* ruler of Kasur in 1760.³³ Such was the magic effect of their appeal that the *sangat* performed *Ardas*, and resolved to take over control of the gurdwara. Soon, when members of SGPC, who were holding a meeting, learnt about this, they felt unhappy over the hasty action and even discussed whether it should be allowed or not. But, Jhabbar and Jathedar Bhuchar pleaded that since *Ardas* had been performed at Akal Takht and the facts as related were true, there should be no going back on the *Ardas*. Thus, a one hundred strong *jatha*, including the 22 veterans of Jhabbar, entered Gurdwara Tarn Taran before sunrise and listened to the *Asa-di-Var kirtan*. After the *Ardas*, a *mahant* addressed the *sangat* saying that they were not mere *Udasi Sadhus*, but had taken *Khande da Amrit*. The moment *jatha* interfered with their arrangements, they would give a befitting answer. In reply, Jhabbar said that they had not come to take control of the Shrine, but to restore Sikh *maryada* and to stop immoral acts of the *mahants*, for, in law, the possession had already been handed over to them by the Government since the day of their control over the shrines at Amritsar.

Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid and other local Sikh respectables summoned some of the level headed *mahants*, and brought home to them the legal position of Gurdwara Control and advised compromise. The *mahants* agreed and a meeting was fixed for 2 p.m., in which a settlement was arrived at and put on record. But under its facade, the *mahants* sent for their helpers and paid hooligans of the area. News

had already spread in the *illaga* about this situation. *Mahant's* supporters as well as about seven thousand devoted Sikhs reached Tarn Taran by the evening. After the *Rahras Ardas*, a *mahant* sitting in *tabeh* of Guru Granth Sahib, was removed physically and a member of the *jatha* was installed there. Both sides had already taken strategic positions inside and outside the shrine. Instantly, there was violent confrontation. The *mahants* and their helpers were heavily drunk and the latter were mere mercenaries. They could not stand the determined blows of the crusaders and started running away, but still they were able to inflict serious wounds on the members of the *jatha*, resulting in two deaths and injuries to several others. Thus, with the martyrdom of Bhai Hukam Singh and Bhai Hazara Singh, control of this historic gurdwara, built by Guru Arjun himself, was assumed by the Panth.³⁴

GURDWARA GURU-KA-BAGH

After listening to the similar wailings of a deputation from the *Guru Ka Bagh* area, as of the *sangat* from Tarn Taran, Jhabbar, in consultation with his *jatha*, declared that control of the shrine would be assumed by the Panth. This gurdwara is barely ten miles away from Amritsar, and was built in memory of the visit of the fifth and ninth gurus. The decision thrilled the people of the locality. Jhabbar, with his fifty men strong *jatha*, reached there on the afternoon of January 31, 1921. A huge gathering had already assembled there. A *diwan* was held in which Jhabbar, after a spirited speech in favour of Gurdwara Reforms invited opinion from the *sangat*. Speaker after speaker repeated what had been told earlier by their representatives. It was decided that the *jatha* would stay for the night inside the gurdwara premises after turning out every inmate except the *mahant*, and another *diwan* would be held on the next morning. If a consensus was arrived at to remove the *mahant*, control of the gurdwara would be taken.

During the night, the *mahant* had arranged to send for his sympathisers, including the highly respected S. Amar Singh Jhabal, who along with his two brothers was deeply involved in the Gurdwara Reform Movement and was an outstanding nationalist. During the next morning *diwan*, S. Amar Singh suggested that in case the *mahant* undertook to follow the Panthic instructions regarding management of the shrine, he may be allowed to continue. Jhabbar replied that once he must be dispossessed. If he could bring *hukamnama* from Akal

Takht for his restoration, it would be obeyed. S. Amar Singh thought that procedure was time consuming and brought a written statement by the *mahant* that he had handed over control of the shrine to the SGPC, and that he undertook to follow their instructions in future. Jhabbar reiterated that, in law, the statement had no value, for, the *mahant* continued in his possession and also because the document was not on a properly stamped paper. S. Amar Singh lost his cool and said that Jhabbar was paying no heed to the local opinion of even those who were equally anxious for reforms in the gurdwaras. At this, Jhabbar relented and said that though S. Amar Singh was wrong, he would not insist further for turning out the *mahant*. He again addressed the congregation and stressed the need for vigilance over the *mahant*'s functioning in the shrine in future, and prayed that *Satguru* help him (*mahant*) give up his past vices. A local committee for general control of the shrine was constituted. After three days, Jhabbar and his *jatha* returned to Amritsar and placed the *mahant*'s written statement on the records of the SGPC.³⁵

On return to his headquarters, Jhabbar took control of three more gurdwaras, all in Sheikhpur district, namely Ker Bawa Kirpa Ram, Machhi Ke and Gurdwara Mai Nikain (Sheikhpur) on February 10, 11, and 12, 1921, respectively.³⁶

GURDWARA NANKANA SAHIB (JANAM ASTHAN)

The Nankana Sahib massacre and its different facets, the darkest episode of the Gurdwara Reform Movement, have been variously reported, and apart from being sketchy, they leave gaps in the narration. For instance, a confidential report dated February 22, 1922, by the Government of Punjab for information of the Government of India and Secretary of State, London, recorded, "The seizure of Nankana Gurdwara by an Akali *jatha* on February 20, 1921, and the massacre of the Sikhs in retaliation by the *mahant* and his followers added fuel to the fire of Sikh discontent".³⁷ Khushwant Singh wrote, "The news of the outrage spread like wild fire. Bands of Akalis from distant towns began to converge on Nankana. The commissioner of Lahore hurried to the scene and, with great alacrity, handed over the keys of the shrine to a representative of the SGPC".³⁸ Ruchi Ram Sahni said, "The *jatha* on its way to an Akali conference near Nankana, went to the gurdwara for homage. They were listening to the *Asa-di-Var*

kirtan when the *goondas* of the *mahant* pounced upon them".³⁹ Shamsher Singh Ashok's account of this incident, though nearer the truth, leaves important gaps in relating the heart-rending tale.⁴⁰ As such, it becomes necessary that the course of this gory episode be told in some detail, in the light of authentic material as contained in '*Jethedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar*', by Bhai Narain Singh, based on the daily diaries of the Jathedar himself, the principal actor in this ghastly scene and a valiant crusader of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. Dr Ganda Singh records, "With the publication of this book, new material has come to light without which there would have been many gaps in the Sikh history of this period".⁴¹

For the seventy two years of British *Raj* (1849-1921), all Sikh shrines remained in possession of *mahants* and *pujaris* under a well planned scheme of the British Government as explained in the foregoing paragraphs.⁴² Gurdwara Nankana Sahib had the largest landed estate (18,900 acres) granted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁴³ Being the birth place of Guru Nanak, it was of great veneration for the Sikhs. The anti-Sikh *maryada* rituals, coupled with scenes of immorality of the *mahants* and *pujaris* for the past three generations, particularly, the wicked doings of the then *mahant* and the misuse of its vast resources, were greatly exercising the minds of the Sikhs, and causing extreme unrest. The handing over of control of Golden Temple and Akal Takht by the Government to the Sikhs made no effect on Mahant Narain Dass of this shrine. Instead, he employed hooligans and even Pathans in large numbers, provided them with weapons including fire arms, strengthened the defence arrangements of the gurdwara and took other precautions to safeguard his control over the shrine. It was only natural that Sikhs during this movement should also assume control of this famous shrine. But, an incident hastened its course. A Session Judge from Sindh, on retirement, came to Punjab with 30 of his family members to pay homage to the gurdwaras in Punjab. They reached Nankana Sahib first of all. They were provided accommodation in the shrine. In the evening, a fourteen years old girl was forcibly snatched away from the family by the *goondas* of the *mahant*. The family fearing further mischief, immediately went out of the gurdwara. They passed the wintry night under trees in great distress. In the early hours of next morning, they received the message that in case the family quietly reached the railway station, the girl would be restored to them. The

unfortunate pilgrims complied. Completely demoralized and broken in spirits, the family returned home.⁴⁴

PANTHIC DECISION TO ASSUME CONTROL OF GURDWARAS

Jhabbar's headquarters at Gurdwara *Khara Sauda*, Chuhar Kana, being only twenty miles away from Nankana Sahib, he soon learnt about this incident. He hurriedly reached Amritsar, explained the latest act of rascality of the *mahant*, and asked for permission of the SGPC, of which he was an important member himself, and which was already in session, to resume control of the shrine urgently. Although, it was well-known how the *mahant* had fortified himself inside the shrine, Jhabbar begged that he needed neither funds nor volunteers. S. Nihal Singh, a sitting Judge of Patiala High Court, suggested that the entire Panth should be allowed to take part in that crusade. After considering pros and cons of the matter, it was resolved that a Panthic congregation be summoned at Nankana Sahib for March 4-6, 1921.⁴⁵

Wide publicity for this Sikh congregation at Nankana Sahib put the *mahant* on red alert. He adopted a two-fold policy of feigned compromise and confrontation. He sent his emissary to Jhabbar and asked for compromise. In a meeting between them, the *mahant* promised to hand over control of the shrine to the Panth. Jhabbar got a sub-committee for compromise appointed by the SGPC to finalize the matter in consultation with the *mahant*. About half a dozen different dates were fixed by Jhabbar for a preliminary meeting between them, but after a day long wait, the *mahant* would send word, asking for another date at a different place.⁴⁶

MAHANT NARAIN DASS'S MACHINATIONS

Jhabbar, on his part, had deployed two of his confidants, Bhai Waryam Singh and Bhai Avtar Singh to watch and report every activity of the *mahant*. While the former lived in the garb of an *Udasi sadhu* in Gurdwara *Janam Asthan* managed by *mahant* Narain Das, the latter had earned such confidence of the *mahant* that he always accompanied him and even attended his top secret meetings as well. They sent regular reports and verbal messages to Jhabbar and kept him abreast of the future shape of things.⁴⁷ They informed how the *mahant* had

summoned five hundred *Udasi sadhus* from Muktsar for his protection, and that when they learnt that the Akalis might sometime occupy the shrine, the *sadhus* asked the *mahant* to transfer the proprietary rights of the shrine to their organization, and that on the latter's refusal, the *Udasis* had left the place in disgust.⁴⁸ Thereafter, at the instance of Mahant Narain Dass, a meeting of prominent Hindus was called at Lala Lajpat Rai's residence at Lahore, and a Trust for management of the shrine was proposed to be formed. The *mahant* donated Rs. 3,000/- for Lala's Paper, *Bande Matram*. The Lala, being a distinguished *Arya Samajist* and an all-India level Congress Leader, suggested eminent persons for the Trust. The *mahant* enquired that since all the proposed Trustees were from Lahore, who would handle the Akalis if they attempted to take control of the shrine. He was told that fight with the Akalis was none of the Trustee's job. At this, the *mahant* was greatly disappointed and came back.⁴⁹ Jhabbar was also informed that Mahant Narain Dass and several others in possession of Sikh gurdwaras had jointly paid Rupees 50,000/- to Mr. King, Commissioner, Lahore, so that they be protected in their present position as mahants. The Commissioner issued a general circular that the *mahants* could be provided police guards on payment of certain amount, and that they might also seek court's injunctions against their being forcibly dispossessed. When consulted, Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh, then Government Advocate, advised Jhabbar to urgently assume control of all the seven gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib, for it was likely that Jhabbar might soon be arrested and the progress of Gurdwara Reforms be thus stalled.⁵⁰ Jhabbar was further informed that the *mahant* had secured the services of twelve absconding murderers of Majha area on payment of Rs. 1,50,000/- for the murder of Sikh leaders, Sardar Harbans Singh Attari, Professor Bhai Jodh Singh, S. Teja Singh Samundari, S. Teja Singh Bhuchar, then *jathedar*, Akal Takht and Jhabbar, with whom the *mahant* would be holding a compromise meeting in a specially arranged room, during March 4-6 congregation at Nankana Sahib.⁵¹ It was also reported to Jhabbar that a Sanatan Sikh Conference along with *mahants*, in possession of all the Sikh shrines, had been summoned at Lahore for February 19-20, where it was proposed to form an organization to forestall forcible takeover of the gurdwaras by the Panth.⁵²

JHABBAR'S JATHA

Jhabbar explained the *mahant's* machinations in detail to his *jatha*. It was decided that the control of Gurdwara Janam Asthan be assumed on February 20, when the *mahant* would be away to the conference at Lahore and that a 5,000 strong *jatha* be formed from the local area, and that the matter be treated as top secret, particularly members of the SGPC should in no case come to know of this. Bhai Lachhman Singh, Bhai Tehal Singh, Bhai Buta Singh and Sant Teja Singh were summoned from Lyallpur district, for they always insisted that they must take part in this crusade.⁵³

The final program for execution of this plan was that the *jathas* from Lyallpur district, should assemble at a particular place, twelve miles behind Nankana Sahib, around 10 p.m. on the night of February 19. They should travel during the night and meet Jhabbar's *jatha* near Nankana Sahib at a fixed place in the small hours of February 20.⁵⁴

PANTHIC LEADERS DECIDE TO INTERVENE

Jhabbar received a telegram from Amritsar that S. Teja Singh Samundri and Master Tara Singh would be travelling by train and that Jhabbar should meet them at railway station, Chuhan Kana, on early morning of February 19. Jhabbar's horse-sense convinced him that the top leaders had come to know of their new plan of action and were coming to dissuade them from executing it. So, instead of meeting the leaders himself, he sent to the railway station one of his confidants. Jhabbar's guess for the leaders' visit proved right.⁵⁵ By mid-day of February 19, about 3,000 members of Jhabbar's *jatha* had reached Gurdwara *Khara Sauda*, when two emissaries of SGPC, Bhai Dalip Singh, martyr of Nankana Sahib massacre, and S. Jaswant Singh Jhabal reached Gurdwara Khara Sauda, and conveyed the Panthic *hukam* NOT to execute the programme fixed for February 20.⁵⁶

Jhabbar explained to the emissaries in minutest detail every plan made by the *mahant* under the garb of compromise, to retain his possession of the gurdwara. He particularly emphasized the *mahant's* murderous gang to assassinate the Panthic leaders. Keeping all these factors in view, they had formed the new programme in consultation with the local leaders and assured the emissaries that by next morning they would take control of the shrine without any difficulty. Jhabbar added that the programme had been reconfirmed telegraphically to all

concerned *jathas* that morning. The Panthic *hukam* was the result of ignorance about the secret designs of the *mahant*. As such, Jhabbar begged for permission to assume control of the shrine urgently.⁵⁷

Sant Teja Singh agreed with everything that Jhabbar had explained, but he thought non-compliance of Panthic *hukam* was against the principle of disciplined organizations. On Jhabbar's further emphasizing his point of view and expressing apprehension of harm to the *Dharowali jatha* at the hands of the *mahant's* ruffians, if Jhabbar's three thousand men did not join them, the Sant said his last words, "Jhabbar, in case you still insist on defying the *hukamnama*, you will stand answerable to the Panth and the Guru", adding that his own *jatha* will not participate in taking control over the gurdwara in the absence of permission from the Panth.⁵⁸

Jhabbar relented, but his lurking fears beacons him to inquire how to inform and dissuade the *Dharowali jatha*, whose members were already on the march. Sardar Dalip Singh took responsibility for this job. Accordingly, a letter conveying the essence of the *hukamnama* was signed by Sardar Dalip Singh, Sardar Jaswant Singh Jhabal, Sant Teja Singh and Jhabbar, and four horsemen were urgently dispatched to locate the *jatha*, deliver the letter to Jathedar Lachhman Singh and to persuade them to return.⁵⁹

Jhabbar informed the members of his *jatha* of the changed programme and said that he feared disaster, in the gurdwara next morning and their services might then again be required. But for the present, he asked one hundred members to stay, and the remaining to go to their villages. In case of need, they would be informed of further course of action. The *jatha*, though disappointed, obeyed its leader.⁶⁰

THE MASSACRE

With a strange quirk of fate, the horsemen, inspite of their night-long efforts, failed to locate the *jatha*, comprising 150 men and women, until it reached the place fixed for junction with the Jhabbar's *jatha*. Then, it was small hours of the morning. For sometime they waited for the latter. Here, Shaheed Lachhman Singh again took a vow from the members not to resist violence if attacked and that they would receive martyrdom as they had earlier pledged at the time of departure from Dharowali. Jathedar Lachhman Singh then asked the lady members not to accompany them further and to go to Gurdwara Tamboo Sahib. It was here that Shaheed Bhai Tehal Singh gave Rupees 18/- out of his pocket to Sardarni Lachhman Singh, requesting to perform

Akhand Path after their martyrdom. *Jathedar* Dharowali performed *Ardas* for the last time, "O Guru Nanak, Thy devotees have come to have your *darshan*, with a yearning to wash the dirt of sins in your holy abode with their blood. Grant them the strength to fulfill their resolve, and if it pleases Thee, let Thy servants be blessed with the boon of martyrdom at your sacred feet."⁶¹

The *jatha* was about to start towards the gurdwara, when one of the horsemen messengers arrived and delivered the letter from the leaders to *Jathedar* Dharowali, briefly explaining its contents. The *Jathedar* glanced through it and apprised the members of what it was all about. There was a brief exchange of views regarding further course of action, when Bhai Tehal Singh observed, that they had just performed *Ardas* and sought the Guru's blessing for martyrdom at the altar of their faith, as they had done earlier at Dharowali, adding that as for himself, he had left his village only after performing a similar *Ardas*. It would not be in accordance with the Sikh tradition to go back on it. Those who wanted to return in obedience to the *hukamnama*, might do so. Saying this, he walked towards the gurdwara. Bhai Lachhman Singh and others repeatedly requested him to relent, but he stuck to his *Ardas*. The *jatha* then, 130 men strong followed him. By this time, another horseman messenger, Bhai Ram Singh, arrived. In vain did he try to persuade Bhai Tehal Singh and the *jatha* to return.⁶² The *jatha* soon entered *darshni deohri* of the gurdwara and shut the main door from inside. While some of the devotees took their seats inside the *parkash asthan*, others sat on the platform and the *baran dari*. *Jathedar* Dharowali sat in *tabeh* of Guru Granth Sahib and began reciting *Gurbani*. The *mahant* came to know of it, on hearing the *Bole so Nihal* slogan of the *jatha*. Initially, he was greatly disappointed that the shrine had, after all, been captured by the Sikhs. But, his men soon informed him that the Sikhs inside the shrine were only a small body of men and that Jhabbar's *jatha* was not among them. He then ordered his hooligans to begin the murderous assault on one and all.⁶³ Himself, he rode on his horse and started making rounds outside the gurdwara to find out whether any more *jathas* were arriving.

Khushwant Singh records, "Mahant Narain Dass's thugs attacked the *jatha* with swords, hatchets and firearms. The dead and dying Akalis were then dragged to a pile of logs which had been collected earlier, and burnt. By the time the police and local Sikhs came on the scene, 130 men had been consumed by the fire".⁶⁴ Lachhman Singh Dharowali, wounded with a gun shot, was tied to a tree and burnt alive. Among the martyrs were Bhai Kehar Singh and his nine years old son,

Darbara Singh.⁶⁵ Hearing the gun shots in the gurdwara, Bhai Dalip and Bhai Waryam Singh ran towards it, the former was shot dead by the *mahant*, and the latter was butchered by his *gundas*.⁶⁶

JHABBAR'S JATHA ASSUMES CONTROL OF GURDWARA

Jhabbar received telegraphic information about the massacre by 11.00 a.m. Along with his 90 members strong *jatha*, he immediately performed *Ardas*, "O *Sat Guru*, our brothers have received martyrdom in an attempt to free the holy shrine. Now, Thy devotees resolve to do this. Grant them the strength to perform this act. In case they are unable to do so, grant them also the boon of martyrdom". Thereafter, they went out in different directions to inform the Sikhs, asking them to join at a particular place, with a view to taking over control of the gurdwara. The message said, "Everybody should come fully armed". Four to five thousand Sikhs including members of Jhabbar's *jatha* and Akali leaders from Amritsar and Sheikhpur arrived by 4.00 p.m. on February 21.

News were obtained from Nankana Sahib that Commissioner Lahore with a Company of British soldiers and other high civil and military officers had arrived at the scene, that the *mahant* and his mercenaries had been arrested and sent to Lahore Fort, that the gurdwara was locked and placed under guard of the British soldiers and that six Sikh leaders from Amritsar had also arrived there.

Jhabbar told those present that his *jatha* would go to the gurdwara, and that the remaining *sangat* should proceed to Gurdwara Khara Sahib. He drew a line and asked, "only those should cross it, who accept to face bullets and martyrdom". Then, he gave final instructions to the *jatha* saying that their way was blocked by the British soldiers armed with machine guns. They were to defy every order. In case of firing, they should not concern themselves with the dead or the dying, but instead run straight to the men behind the guns, get hold of them and finish them physically, not a single soldier was to be left alive.⁶⁷

Jhabbar drew up his 2,200 member strong *jatha* into eleven parts of 200 each, marching in rows of twenty five, led by their respective *jathedars* on horses, and Jhabbar himself leading them all on his horse. Jhabbar received a written order from the Deputy Commissioner not to proceed further, which he tore and threw away in contempt. When they went a little further, Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh met them, and requested them to take the *jatha* back or else there would be another tragedy. Disregarding this advice, Jhabbar continued the march, until they were face to face with the British officers and the Sikh leaders. They

asked the *jatha* to stop, but Jhabbar declined. When specially requested by Sardar Lal Singh, his close friend, to hear the Deputy Commissioner, Jhabbar agreed. The D.C. wanted them not to proceed further, for, a British force under a Major General was in position, and in case of non-compliance, there would be firing. Jhabbar told him that in that case, he would soon come to know how the *jatha* reacted to the firing. The D.I.G. police asked Jhabbar what he wanted after all? Jhabbar replied that they desired nothing from the Government, adding that instead of the *mahant*, the Government had occupied the gurdwara and that they wanted it to be vacated immediately. The D.C. intervened to say that they would hand over the shrine to them the following morning, to which Jhabbar firmly stated that they had performed *Ardas* to get hold of the shrine and recite the *Rehras* prayer that very evening. After a brief discussion among the British officers, the keys of the gurdwara were handed over to Jhabbar. Soon, the army was withdrawn, and written possession of the shrine was given by the Commissioner to a hurriedly constituted Gurdwara Managing Committee, with Sardar Harbans Singh Attari as President.⁶⁸

GOVERNOR PUNJAB VISITS NANKANA SAHIB

On February 22, a telegram was received from Sir Sundar Singh Majithia, Executive Counsellor, that the Governor Punjab, along with his Executive Council, would be reaching the following morning and that the scenes of butchery and the half burnt bodies of martyrs should remain as they were. The Governor and his party saw the horrible spectre of the massacre, and he kept weeping all the time they remained in the shrine. An old lady appeared before the Governor and said that her four sons and a grandson were martyred, and justice be given to her. Saying this, she fell on the ground unconscious.⁶⁹ The Governor assured the Sikhs that justice would be done in the matter and that the criminals would be dealt with according to law. He also announced that a Sikh force would be deployed to further safeguard the gurdwara.⁷⁰ The appointment of S.B. Mehtab Singh, Public Prosecutor, to conduct a preliminary enquiry, showed the Government's earnestness to allay Sikh suspicions and avoid direct conflict with them.^{70a} Next day, five *mahants* of different gurdwaras at Nankana Sahib, voluntarily handed over the shrines to the Akalis and compromised with them.

MAHARAJA DALIP SINGH'S DAUGHTER VISITS THE SITE

On Feb. 24, the daughter of Maharaja Dalip Singh, who lived

at Lahore, accompanied by Sardar Joginder Singh Rasulpur, came to Nankana Sahib. She inspected the site and learnt about every detail of the episode. She then sent for Jhabbar, and on the latter's arrival, patted him on the back and publicly admired his act of courage and Panthic services.⁷¹

GANDHI'S GRATUITOUS ADVICE

Accompanied by other Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi visited Nankana Sahib on March 3, 1921, to exploit the prevalent Sikh resentment against the Government and give it a direction. Their intentions were not clean.^{71a} Jhabbar explained all the details of the massacre and at the end said that the Governor had shown complete sympathy and assured justice in the matter. All the Congress leaders praised the Sikhs and condemned the Government in their speeches. Mahatma Gandhi observed in his address that his faith forbids him to commit suicide so as to become one with the martyrs and said, that some Sikhs were co-operating with the Government, but now he advised all of them to work for independence of the country and non-cooperation with the Government.⁷² To his dismay and amazement, Gandhi now learnt that the Sikhs did not consider themselves to be Hindus, which he had perceived them to be. On March 13, i.e., ten days after his visit to Nanakana Sahib, he wrote in the '*Navjivan*', "Till today, I had thought of them as a sect of Hinduism. But, their leaders think that theirs is a distinct religion"..... "Their sacred book is the word of their Gurus and apart from the book, they accept no other scriptures as holy".^{72a} He wanted them, "to dedicate this martyrdom to *Bharat Mata*, and believe that the Khalsa can remain free only in a free India". He offered them a gratuitous advice to go in for arbitration for settlement of possession of gurdwaras or postpone the question till the attainment of *swarajya*.^{72b}

Gandhi was all the more piqued, firstly, at Akalis running a perfectly non-violent movement drawing encomiums all around, whereas his movement had ended in a fiasco; and, secondly, the Hindu-Muslim riots extinguishing whatever good was left of his non-violent non-cooperation movement. However, the testimony of C.F. Andrews and others on *Guru ka Bagh Morcha*, to Gandhi seemed bunkum. Being a typical egotist, he could not relish such encomiums being showered on the Akalis, about whom he had such serious reservations.^{72c}

In mid-May 1923, Indu Lal K. Yajnik was transferred to stay with Gandhi in Yerwada Jail. He discussed with Gandhi, "About the wonderful heroism and disciplined suffering of the Akali Sikhs, who

carried out a most extraordinary species of *satyagraha* against the corrupt temple priests, and incidently against the Government forces allied with them". Gandhi was most disagreeable to the introductory opening of the subject. And, we can not do better than quote Yajnik on his discussions with Gandhi which hurt him and "chilled my enthusiasm".^{72d}

"He told me that he had read a good deal of literature about the Sikh religion and the Sikh religious campaigns, and also knew the Akalis well by experience, and he had come to the conclusions that their campaign fell far short of true *satyagraha*, for he had no doubt that they harboured violence in their hearts even when they appeared to welcome a hailstorm of bullets, swords and spears with apparent equanimity. Even the large number in which they marched on Nankana, and other shrines, served to show that they harboured in their hearts a species of violence". Hurt at such adverse judgement, I brought to his notice the generous encomium that had been showered on them by no less a person than Mr. C.F. Andrews, who had seen with his own eyes, these hefty men beaten and even killed during their successive struggles without even an attempt at retaliation. He heard all this and much more that I put before him. But while expressing the warmest admiration for their heroism, he rigidly stuck to his conclusion and refused to give his saintly blessing to such a semi-militant movement.^{72e}

SIKH LEADERS DECIDE NOT TO CO-OPERATE

In a meeting of Sikh leaders at Nankana Sahib, Master Mota Singh proposed that they should not co-operate with the Government even in Nankana Sahib case. Sardar Harbans Singh Attari, Prof. Jodh Singh and Jhabbar opposed this resolution, but as the Sikhs had recently joined the Congress, they showed greater respect for what Gandhi had advised them. Accordingly, resolution for non-co-operation in prosecution of Nanakana Sahib case was passed, and copies were sent to the Government telegraphically.

GOVERNMENT REVISES ITS POLICY

On March 8, a meeting of Sikh leaders of all shades of opinion was summoned by Government at Lahore. Sir John Maynard, Home Member, advised Sikhs to take possession of gurdwaras only through law courts. S.B. Mehtab Singh replied that no such law existed. But the Home Member reiterated, that in future the Sikhs should not take possession of gurdwaras by force. Jhabbar replied that if this was the

purpose of the meeting, it had better not been called, and left the meeting. All Sikh leaders followed.

The Home Member then observed that till then the Government thought that the Gurdwara Reform Movement was a religious affair. But, now it was clear that the Akalis were working under the influence of Congress. Government was, therefore, obliged to revise its previous policy of allowing them to take possession of gurdwaras as heretofore.

For sometime past, the Government seemed to be working on a policy which Lord Lawrence had once thought advisable, "The Sikhs were the bravest and the most chivalrous race in India, and they now seemed disposed to submit with manly self-restraint to our superior power, if only we use it with equity and toleration".⁷³ But with the Sikhs adopting non-cooperation resolution, more than once under Congress influence, against the advice of their sober leaders, the Government decided to take action against the Akalis.

Besides, as communicated in a confidential memorandum, dated Feb. 22, 1922, to Government of India, Punjab Government thought, "The Akali movement is likely to be a cause of much greater concern than the civil disobedience campaign instituted by Mr Gandhi.... Gandhi's propaganda makes its appeal mainly to urban classes, which lack both the stamina and physical courage to oppose successfully even small bodies of police; the Akali campaign is essentially a rural movement and its followers are of fine physique with a national history of which the martial characteristics have been kept alive. Finally, the national volunteer force of the Congress is unarmed, whereas the Akali has acquired the right to arm himself with a formidable offensive weapon. There is little in common between the two movements beyond hatred of the British rule".⁷⁴

GOVERNMENT ACTS AGAINST AKALIS

Commissioner Lahore, accompanied by senior military officers, again arrived at Nankana Sahib with a sizable force on March 11, and ordered arrest of Jhabbar, which the latter complied with. But Jhabbar told his volunteers that, under no circumstances, should the authorities be allowed to enter the gurdwara. About 150 Akali leaders were arrested throughout Punjab and prosecutions launched against them. Jhabbar was charged on 33 counts. The pro-Congress Sikh leaders of the movement were now pressing for non-cooperation in these cases, but the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* and S.B. Mehtab Singh were

against this policy. It was decided that the opinion of the arrested leaders be taken in this respect. Leaders of both the groups came to the jail to consult the arrested leaders. The latter decided that they would abide by what Jhabbar thought appropriate. Jhabbar gave his unambiguous opinion that their movement was purely a religious one and should not be linked to politics. Their cases were, however, proceeded against them. They were convicted to various sentences, Jathedar Bhuchar and Jhabbar to nine and eighteen years of imprisonment, respectively. However, after six months, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and Sardar Joginder Singh Rasulpur were able to secure the release of all the convicted leaders on the condition that they would not take possession of gurdwaras forcibly.

THE KEYS AFFAIR

At the time of taking over control of Harimandar and Akal Takht by the Panth in October, 1920, S. Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was the *sarbrah*. Jathedar Bhuchar and Jhabbar thought it inadvisable to take the keys of *tosha khana*, which contained sacred relics and other valuable articles worth millions of rupees until a regular SGPC was constituted. As such, the SGPC on being formed, passed a resolution on October 29, 1921, to obtain keys from the *sarbrah*. The latter consulted the D.C., who, on instructions from the Government, deposited the keys in the Government Treasury. A virulent campaign against the Government's action was launched by the Sikhs in the press and on platform. The Government banned meetings in Amritsar, Lahore and Sheikhupur districts under the Sedition Act, in spite of which the Akali leaders continued its tirade. As a result, about 200 leaders including office bearers of the SGPC, were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The Akalis selected a new SGPC, and continued the *morcha*. The Government tried to appoint a new *sarbrah*, but not a single Sikh came forward to accept the post. The Government felt helpless against the ever rising tide of religious fervour of the entire Sikh nation. Therefore, Sir John Maynard announced release of Sikh prisoners on January 12, 1922. Five days later, the Government handed over the 53 keys of the *toshan khana* to Baba Kharak Singh in a congregation of Sikhs at Akal Takht on January 17. Mahatma Gandhi, in a telegram to Baba Kharak Singh, said, "First decisive battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations."⁷⁵ What a subtle trick to turn a purely religious struggle into a political campaign, which landed the Sikhs in a most formidable confrontation with the Government!

GURU-KA-BAGH MORCHA

Mahant Sundar Das of *Guru-ka-Bagh* Gurdwara had handed over possession of the shrine to the Akalis, who were managing it since January, 1921. Under advice of the local officials, the *mahant* managed to remove from the record of the SGPC his written undertaking of handing over the shrine to the Panth. When, as usual, the Sikh employees of the shrine cut some wood from the gurdwara land for use in the common kitchen, the *mahant* reported the matter to the police, who arrested the employees and launched prosecution against them. This formed the basis for this new *morcha*, which once again brought the mighty *Raj* to its knees before the surging tide of Sikh religious and patriotic fervour.

Since August 22, 1922, a hundred strong *jatha* would daily march from Akal Takht, after a vow to remain peaceful and non-violent against all sort of humiliations and merciless beatings by the police under direct supervision of a British Additional Superintendent of Police. Jhabbar's veterans again formed the first *jatha* of this *morcha*. For nineteen days the encounter between the police and the passive Akalis, including several *jathas* of retired First World War army pensioners, continued. Such was the enormity of the police atrocities and such the publicity arrangements of the SGPC and such its effect on the conscience of the entire Indian nation, that leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Sir Joginder Singh Rasulpur, C.F. Andrews, Dr Ansari, Swami Shankracharya of Sharda Peeth, Swami Shardhanand, Mufti Kifayat Ullah, President of the Jamait-u-Ulemai-Hind, Delhi, Dr Duni Chand, Bar-at-law, President, Panjab Provincial Congress Committee, Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni and hundreds of other eminent persons, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians from all over India, irrespective of party affiliations, converged on the scene of occurrence and witnessed the 'Christ like' noble behaviour of the Akalis.⁷⁶ The Christian Missionary, C.F. Andrews apprised the Lt. Governor, Punjab, of the police brutality, who visited *Guru-ka-Bagh* on September 13, and ordered police beatings to stop forthwith. By then, 5605 Akalis had been arrested and 1650 hospitalised.⁷⁷ The gigantic non-violent struggle of the Akalis was covered by representatives of the press from as far away as Allahabad, Calcutta and Madras. 18 doctors and 24 compounders of various institutions such as Congress, Khilafat Movement, etc., and private practitioners were attending on the wounded at the scene of occurrence and in the four hospitals installed in the Golden Temple Complex. In spite

of the extremity of police barbarity, so many Akali volunteers had assembled at *Akal Takht* and everyone was pressing the SGPC to send their *jatha* earlier than the others. Realising that the spirit of the Akalis could not be crushed, the Government came forward with a face saving device. A Hindu philanthropist, Sir Ganga Ram of Lahore, was persuaded to take on lease the gurdwara land from the *mahant*. Sir Ganga Ram informed the Government that he did not need police help. In this way, this gory episode came to an end on November 17, 1922. The Akalis again took over possession of the shrine and the lands attached to it. This was the second decisive battle won.⁷⁸

APPRECIATION BY THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian National Congress, in its annual session at Gaya in December-January, 1924, passed a resolution recording, "With pride and admiration, its appreciation of the unexampled bravery of the Akali martyrs, and the great and noble example of non-violence set by them for the benefit of the whole nation".⁷⁹ Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, while addressing a public meeting at Amritsar observed, "If India is to have independence soon, every Hindu family in India should have a baptised Sikh among them, because, only those can have freedom who can receive martyrdom bravely like the Akalis, for, otherwise the idea of independence would remain a mere fantasy".⁸⁰ Having personally witnessed the brutal happenings in this *morcha*, C.F. Andrews said, "The Cross had travelled East".

THE NABHA EPISODE

Two episodes during the year 1923, again drove the Sikh Panth to confrontation with the Government; (a) removal of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, (b) Akali *morcha* at Jaito. Maharaja Nabha was of national views and always sympathised with national causes. During the years 1906-8, as a member of the Indian Council of State, he had close association with the national leaders such as G.K. Gokhle, Tilak, Raj Bihari Bose, etc. He was instrumental in the passage of Sikh Anand Marriage Act in 1908. Through his intervention, Gurdwara Rakab Ganj affair was amicably settled. At the time of his ascending the Nabha *gaddi* in 1912, instead of inviting the British Agent for the coronation ceremony, he himself summoned a *darbar* and performed the function. When the Governor Punjab sought to visit Nabha, to personally congratulate him on his assumption of *gaddi*, the Maharaja informed him that he would not like the Governor to bother himself for

such an ordinary occasion. At the time of the Nankana Sahib massacre, he expressed deep sympathy with the martyrs and, as per decision of the SGPC to wear black turbans by all Sikhs, in commemoration of this tragic happening, the Maharaja also wore a black turban.

The Maharaja had a dispute with the Maharaja of Patiala, known for his pro-Government role. He had no dispute with the Government of India, but the latter was looking for an opportunity to settle score with him for his national views. As a result of mediation, Maharaja Nabha was forced to abdicate in July, 1923. Col. Cichin, Political Agent for Phulkian States, who, with the help of troops and armoured cars, took the Maharaja Nabha by surprise on July 8, 1923, taunted him with the query, 'Where is that Akali?'⁸¹ The announcement of deposition the following day, helped raise a storm of protest against the Government interference in Nabha, and was taken as a challenge by the Akalis.

THE JAITO MORCHA

It was not their wont to take things lying down. The Akali leaders explained the various facets of the painful episode to the Sikh masses through press and platform. They sent telegrams to the Viceroy to restore the status quo and supply balm to the tormented Sikh psyche particularly to the residents of Nabha state, but to no effect. The SGPC then appealed to the Sikh masses to start *Akhand Paths* and offer prayers for the restoration of the Maharaja. It was one such *Akhand Path* at Gurdwara Gangsar, Jaito, which the Nabha state authorities disrupted on September 14, 1923, against which sacrilege, the Akalis launched a *morcha*.

On a suggestion from the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy ordered the Punjab Government to declare the SGPC and Akali Dal unlawful bodies. Government arrested 50 members of the SGPC, and charged them with conspiracy to wage war against the Emperor.^{81A} The sufferings of Akalis received country-wide attention. The Indian National Congress at its Delhi session deputed Jawahar Lal Nehru, Principal Gidwani and K. Santanam to go to Jaito and study the situation. They, too, were arrested and sentenced to two and half years of imprisonment. However, Pt. Moti Lal Nehru's efforts, through the Viceroy, brought about their release.

When Pt. Moti Lal Nehru reached Nabha railway station on September 24, he was officially informed that he could not enter the town. When told that he had come to see his son, Messers Johnston and

Ogilvie, Administrator and his Assistant visited Pt. Moti Lal Nehru at the railway station and had a long talk with him. On learning of Pt. Moti Lal's presence, multitudes of people began to assemble there for his *darshan*, with the result that he had to come out of the waiting room again and again. *Pandit Ji* questioned them searchingly, if they believed that the hard things said against the Maharaja by his detractors were true. They replied that the campaign of villification was the work of a few traitors and self seekers. On asking, if they wanted the Maharaja back, they cried out with one voice, they were longing for his return with their heart and soul.⁸¹ *Pandit Ji* left Nabha the same evening without seeing his son.

In the beginning, daily *jathas* of 25 each from Akal Takht to Jaito were sent to resume the interrupted *Akhand Path* since mid-September. This continued till February, 1924. The Government now decided to crush the movement and arrested the second batch of 62 SGPC members and other Akali leaders on January 7, 1924. Government also made the *mahant* of Gurdwara Bhai Pheru in Lahore district to resile from his earlier compromise with the Akalis by which the shrine had been handed over to the latter, with the sole object of dividing the Akalis' struggle on two fronts. The Akalis then started another *marcha* for possession of Bhai Pheru Gurdwara as well, which continued till September, 1925, resulting in the arrest of 4,000 Akalis, when, with the passage of the Gurdwara Act, 1925, the agitation was suspended and control of the shrine assumed by the Panth.

The Government continued repression of the Jaito *marcha*, when on February 9, 1924, the Akalis sent its first *Shahidee jatha* of 500 reaching Jaito on February 20-21, the third anniversary of the Nankana Sahib tragedy. Crowds of sympathisers and well-wishers, numbering about 5,000-6,000, were marching along with the *jatha*. Included among the sympathisers were Dr Kitchlu, Bar-at-Law, Principal Gidwani, Mr. Zimmand of 'New York Times' and thousands of others. According to the testimony of the above said unimpeachable eye witnesses, the *jatha* was moving in perfect order, and non-violent as well as unarmed when fired upon by the state forces, leading to about 100 dead and 200 wounded. Nearly 700 Sikhs, including the members of the *jatha* and the accompanying crowds, were arrested.⁸² For 24 hours after the shooting, neither the Sikhs were allowed to attend to the wounded nor the authorities themselves rendered any assistance, with the result that many died for lack of timely medical assistance.^{82a}

This second massacre of the Gurdwara Reform Movement

aroused sympathy for the Akali cause throughout India. On January 27, 47 members of the Central Assembly, including M.A. Jinnah, Sir Mohd. Yaqub and Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, moved an adjournment motion, to discuss this gory happening. A similar motion was also moved in the Punjab Council. A day later, the Working Committee of the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution of sympathy with the victims and promised assistance to the sufferers.⁸³

In this trial of strength, the authorities found that they were unable to effectively put a stop to the growing Akali agitation. All the jails having been filled by the Akali volunteers, and there being no immediate end to the agitation, the Government was compelled to open fresh negotiations with the Akali leadership for a legislative solution of the Akali problem. Accordingly, General Birdwood, the C-in-C, Northern Command, who was known for his friendship with the Sikhs, was invited by the Viceroy to negotiate with the Akali leadership. A Committee with General Birdwood as Chairman and Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Narain Singh M.L.C.s, as members, was set up to remove the misunderstanding, and to ascertain the lines on which a fresh legislation for gurdwara management could be passed. However, after a whole month's discussions, no agreed solution to the problem could be arrived at.^{83a}

Forty thousand Sikh sympathisers were present at the time of departure of the second 500 strong *shahidee jatha* from Akal Takht on February 28, who vowed to perform 101 *Akhand Paths* at Gurdwara Gangsar in place of the one interrupted earlier.⁸⁴ Several members of the Council of State, including Pt. M.M. Malaviya, Mr. D.P. Sinha, Messers Ranganaswami Iyenger, Vedmurti and M.S. Bhatt, accompanied by three Punjab Councillors nominated by the Punjab Government, failed in their attempt to bring about a reconciliation even after their visits to Nabha and Gurdwara Gangsar.⁸⁵ The members of the *shahidee jatha* were arrested on reaching Jaito and later let off in far flung jungles infested with poisonous and deadly insects. As the Nabha Administration was in no mood to allow the Akalis to perform the *Akhand Paths* uninterrupted, 17 *shahidee jathas* of 500 each were sent from Akal Takht between February 21, 1924 to April, 1925. Included in these *jathas* were members from Punjab, Bengal, Shanghai, Hongkong and North America. The *jathas* included retired army and civilian personnel. This long drawn out struggle for exercise of a religious rite between peaceful and non-violent crusaders and the revengeful Nabha Administration, and its cognizance having been taken by the Central Assembly and many

other All-India political and social institutions, put the Government in an awkward situation.

FORMATION OF SEWAK SUDHAR COMMITTEES

Edward Maclagon, Governor Punjab, in his letter dated March 1, 1924, to Sir Hailey, then Home Member, Government of India, wrote that, "Deterrent sentences to the under-trial Akalis might make the Sikhs ready to put forward reasonable terms". Sir Hailey supported this view, but added that the leaders of the movement should be hit much harder than what has been done so far. During the interval between the failure of Birdwood negotiations in June, 1924, and the passage of the Gurdwara Act in July 1925, the Akalis and their resources were put to the severest test by the new Punjab Governor Sir Malcolm Hailey.^{85a} At this critical juncture, it was the national leaders like Pt. M.M. Malaviya and M.A. Jinnah, who came to the rescue of the Akalis. They tried to take the wind out of Hailey's sail by drafting their Bill in consultation with the Akali leadership and by asking them to move it in the Punjab Council, and the Hindu members to support it. In case the Bill was not allowed to be introduced, Malaviya had declared that they would introduce the same in the Central Legislature on the ground that there were Sikh gurdwaras outside Punjab as well.^{85b} Sir Malcolm Hailey, took over as Governor Punjab in May, 1924. Sir Hailey having failed to crush the ever surging religious fervour of the Akalis, and also in view of the political moves contemplated by the national leaders to introduce the Gurdwara Bill in the central Assembly, initiated a subtle policy of creating pro-Govt. groups of some retired personnel and formed them into *Sewak Sudhar* Committees. By October 1924, the formation of a provincial *Sudhar* Committee was announced. The Govt. again, as in the case of *Guru ka Bagh Morcha*, came out with a face saving device. A *jatha* organised by this Committee was allowed to enter Gurdwara Gangsar to perform the *Akhand Path*. The Akalis later performed 101 *Akhand Paths* by way of penance.

THE GURDWARA ACT

With the successful close of *Jaito Morcha*, Sir Hailey realised the poignancy of Sikh demand to draft themselves a Gurdwara Bill. Accordingly, "a Bill introduced by S. Tara Singh of Moga, as a Private Members Bill, was adopted by the Punjab Legislative Council on July 8, 1925, inspite of the poisonous and misleading statement by Gandhi against the Gurdwara Reform Movement and opposition in the Punjab

Council by such eminent Hindus as Raja Narinder Nath, Dr Gokal Chand Narang and others. The Act defined a 'Sikh' who made the declaration, 'I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh that I, believe in Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the Ten Gurus and that I have no other religion'. A *patit* (apostate) was excluded from membership of the Gurdwara Committees".⁸⁶

"Thus, after a sustained and painful struggle, which cost the Sikh Panth 400 dead, 20,000 injured and 30,000 jailed men and women, besides dismissals from services, withdrawals of *jagirs* and pensions, confiscation of properties and impositions of fines amounting to Rs. 15 lakhs, the corrupt and anti-Sikh *maryada mahants* and *pujaris* were driven out from the Sikh gurdwaras, which were now brought under the jurisdiction of the Gurdwara Act, 1925, and were restored to the Guru Panth".⁸⁷ This added another golden page to the Sikh chronicles of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Jathedar Jhabbar, realising the nature of the long drawn out *morchas* at Jaito and Bhai Pheru, decided to remain outside jail so as to help arrange volunteers for this struggle. The 8th, 500 strong *shahidee jatha* was sent by him from Gurdwara *Sachcha Sauda*. He toured Punjab and delivered spirited religious sermons exhorting Sikhs to get baptised, and fight with heart and soul for their right to control their gurdwaras. The new Governor Sir Hailey, delivered his first speech, saying that when courts would pass orders for restoration of a gurdwara back to a *mahant*, the Government would ensure that its possession was delivered to him. In reply, Jhabbar issued a statement saying, that a court order had already been passed in favour of the *mahant* regarding Akal Takht, and that not to speak of the Governor, even the Viceroy would not be able to have its possession taken back from the Panth. In fact, the Sikhs would soon take over all the remaining gurdwaras as well.⁸⁸ Five days later, Jhabbar was sentenced to 18 years of imprisonment and thrown in Chambelpur jail in 1924. After four and half years of indescribable hardships in different jails, Jhabbar was released in thoroughly shattered health, for, the Government would not take the risk of his dying inside a jail.

POSSESSION OF GURDWARA PROPERTIES

After passage of the Gurdwara Act, 1925, taking possession of all the properties in the names of different gurdwaras in Punjab was no easy job. Nankana Sahib Gurdwara being the largest landed estate, presented the toughest example. Accordingly, on January 13, 1933,

Jhabbar, Bhai Narain Singh, manager of the gurdwara accompanied by other assistants, went to take the actual possession of the lands situated in Patti Lehna Das for which a court decree had already been obtained. The tenants came out in good number to fight it out when one of them was seriously injured in the encounter. Three days later, during a magisterial enquiry, the injured man died. His forged dying declaration was recorded to the effect that Jhabbar had stabbed him with a spear, and that Bhai Narain Singh, Manager, had given him a sword blow. The Government was determined to get them capital punishment along with nine others who were mentioned in the F.I.R. The Sessions Judge, Chaudhary Ihsan-Ul-Huq, happened to be a member of Maharaja Patiala's cricket team, through whose good offices, all the eleven accused were got scot free. Thus, after being in jail for five months on a murder charge, Jathedar Jhabbar was mercifully once more spared for Panthic services.

Jhabbar with his 25 member strong *jatha* took possession of the properties worth annual income of a *lakh* and a half of Gurdwara Kot Bhai Than Singh from the local western educated Nawab in September, 1937.

LAST DAYS OF JHABBAR

Jhabbar would normally attend Panthic functions and speak on current matters. Sometimes, he had to inform the public about Government misdeeds. On one such report by the C.I.D., a warrant of arrest was issued against him in 1944. During this period, he had developed urinary trouble. He hurriedly got himself operated and informed the police about his whereabouts in a private clinic in Lahore, where he was arrested and then sentenced to one year imprisonment. He was 70 years old then. On his release, he again engaged himself in *gurnat parchar* and Panthic services.

During the partition in 1947, Jhabbar returned to India after every Hindu and Sikh had left Nankana Sahib area. He then occupied himself in resettlement of the people who had arrived from the other side of the border. Himself with his family, he settled in village Babri, in Karnal district where during his remaining 14 years of life, he got a high school, a hospital, a pacca road and other similar amenities for the area sanctioned. In 1962, after a brief illness, he passed away in his village at the age of 88. Bhai Narain Singh records, "I frequently visited him during his illness. First of all, he would always put searching questions regarding the general welfare of the Panth".

Such is the tale, in brief, of the Sikh gurdwaras, Harimandar and Akal Takht and of some of the Sikh saint-soldiers like the valiant, Jathedar, Kartar Singh Jhabbar, who brought glory and honour to the nation.

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AKAL TAKHT AND SIKH HERITAGE

Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon

Harimandar Sahib, the holiest shrine of Sikhism was built by the fifth Sikh guru, Guru Arjun. The Akal Takht, the highest seat of temporal authority of the Sikhs, was built by the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind to administer to the empirical needs of the people. The two places standing opposite each other form part of the *Darbar Sahib*, an integrated complex, which represents the integrated ideology of the Sikh Gurus.

Sikhism is primarily a whole-life or *miri-piri* spiritual system, which takes cognisance of all the spiritual and socio-political problems of man. It is significant to note that the teachings of the Gurus were not confined to the spiritual sphere alone. They covered the entire range of human activities in the phenomenal world, including the socio-political sphere. The Gurus believed that the religious life must be lived and practised in the socio-political context. They clarified that fighting against injustice was not against the spirit of any religion, rather it was an essential part of a practical religion. At a time when Indian thought was dominated by asceticism and world-negation, the Gurus' call to action had a special appeal. This call was for social betterment and social service, practical and humanitarian. The message of the Gurus was one of universal brotherhood and welfare for all. They inaugurated a life-affirming, life-asserting, egalitarian and virile movement. Dynamism of the Sikh history must be viewed in this light.

Darbar Sahib vindicates the unique idea of spiritual and empirical unity, of the inalienable *miri-piri* ideal handed down to the Sikhs by their Gurus, the ideal that has nurtured and sustained them through the centuries. Unfortunately, the unique doctrinal position of the Harimandar Sahib and the Akal Takht has not been appreciated due to lack of a clear perception of the Sikh doctrines.

Ever since the days of Guru Hargobind, the Akal Takht has been the venue of socio-political deliberations of the Sikhs. The first

'*hukamnama*' (religious commandment) to the Sikhs was issued by Guru Hargobind to offer him arms and good horses whenever they visited him, as it had become necessary to resort to arms to meet the challenge of the Mughal tyranny on the religio-political front. The Guru came to be looked upon as '*Sacha patshah*' (True king), and the assembly of his followers came to be known as '*darbar*' or court. The appellation *Darbar Sahib* has come down since those times. The Guru also wore two swords, signifying dominion over the two worlds, the visible and the invisible. The establishment of the Akal Takht met the long-standing need of the Sikh Panth to have a rallying point to discuss their temporal and religious affairs. It brought out the essential unity and practicability of the Sikh faith, which took a full and comprehensive view of life. The Guru created among his people, a will to resist and stand up to the tyranny and oppression of the times. It was an unfolding of the path laid down by Guru Nanak.

It was from the Akal Takht that the Gurus raised the banner of religious and political freedom and denounced the state oppression of the times. During the turbulent phases in Sikh history, pickets were posted on all roads leading to Amritsar, and the city was made out of bounds for the Sikhs, but Akal Takht never lost its relevance. During the dark period of the eighteenth century, the Sikhs assembled at the Akal Takht to discuss matters of political importance and sought spiritual and temporal blessings. As noted by J.D. Cunningham, a meeting of the '*Sarbat Khalsa*' or a theo-political assembly of the whole Sikh people was held at least once a year to seek 'wisdom and unanimity of counsel' from the Guru and the Holy Book. It was perhaps hoped that the performance of religious duties and the awe inspired by so holy a place might cause selfishness to yield to a regard for the general welfare. The decisions taken at these meetings were known as '*gurmattas*'. John Malcolm, a contemporary chronicler observed: "When the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of general good and actuated by the principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interest of the religion and commonwealth to which he belongs". It is in pursuit of this tradition that the Sikhs still meet at the Akal Takht to resolve their factional disputes. The institutions of '*Sarbat Khalsa*' and *gurmatta* have taken firm roots in Sikhism.

The Akal Takht served as the headquarters of the Sikh movement which played a historic role in the deliverance of Punjab from the Mughal oppression and the Afghan usurpation. On the Diwali day of October 27, 1761, the Sikhs assembled at the Akal Takht and passed a *gurmatta* (decision in the name of the Guru) to liberate Punjab from the foreign invaders and seize all their strongholds. They also took a vow to take all possible measures to save thousands of young girls who were being carried as war booty by the invaders. Each part of the *Takht* became a legend of valour, sacrifice and devotion. It became a symbol of the dauntless spirit of the Sikhs and their unyielding determination to survive against all odds. Even when the admission of the Sikhs to the temple was banned, it could not deter them from undertaking a pilgrimage to holy *Takht*. John Malcolm observed that some performed the pilgrimage in secret and in disguise. "The Sikh horsemen were seen riding at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners, to seek, instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom". The same authority states that an instance was never known of a Sikh taken on his way to Amritsar, consenting to abjure his faith. Many great martyrdoms and triumphs have been associated with the historic *Takht*. In the words of Malcolm "no better death is conceivable for a Sikh than that which overtakes him while defending the great cause of his faith at this centre of Sikhism". No persecution could ever extinguish the light that was lit by the Gurus in their hearts. They have shown a remarkable will and potency to grapple with all crises without compromising the basic and enduring values of their faith.

The message of the Sikh Gurus was one of universal benevolence and love for all. It was at the Akal Takht that the weak and the meek, the needy and the oppressed, came from far and near to seek help against tyranny and oppression. Once a Brahmin of Kasur came and laid his complaint before the assembled Khalsa that his bride had been forcibly taken away from him by the local *Nawab*. The Sikhs vowed that they would not rest, until they had restored the Brahmin's wife to him. And they did keep the vow. The Sikhs made tremendous sacrifices to protect the prestige and pride of their debilitated Hindu brethren. They rescued from the clutches of the invaders, hundreds of Hindu and Maratha girls, who were being carried away to Ghazni for auction in the slave market. The Sikhs also retrieved the portal of the

famous Somnath temple of the Hindus which was taken away by the Afghan invader Ahammad Shah Abdali. On April 10, 1765, after the return of the invader, the Sikhs assembled at the Akal Takht and passed a *gurmatta* to liberate Lahore. The subsequent Sikh history of the next few decades must be seen as a struggle for the fulfilment of this theo-political resolution. Eventually, the Sikhs occupied Lahore and became the sovereign rulers of Punjab, in fulfilment of this vow.

The Akal Takht became a symbol of the Sikh struggle for freedom and the nucleus of a crusade against a malevolent rule. In an attempt to humble and humiliate the Sikhs and to destroy their spiritual and cultural roots, it was made a special target of attack by the invaders. It is important to understand that, in pursuance of their basic principles of unity of religious and political ideals, the Sikhs have been waging a dual struggle for the preservation of their identity, ethos and culture, and for the progress and promotion of universal interests of mankind as a whole.

During the early part of the British rule, *Darbar Sahib* was in the control of pro-government *mahants* and *pujaris*. It was after tremendous sacrifices, that the Akali Dal won the battle for the freedom of their shrines, culminating in the Gurdwara Act of 1925. It is noteworthy that in the pre-independence days the Congress never objected to the theo-political status of the *Darbar Sahib*. In their statements, the Congress supported the Akali Dal and the SGPC in all their programmes and activities. The Akalis were projected in such flattering terms as the 'only living wing of the national movement' and the 'strongest community in India'. On one occasion, the Congress leaders described the official attack on the Akali Dal as 'a direct challenge to the rights of free association of all Indians and a blow aimed at all movements for freedom'. On another occasion, Nehru was put behind the bars for supporting the Akali agitation in the Nabha State. Nehru condemned the British high-handedness, their 'unscrupulous' and 'crooked' ways, and the arbitrary nature of justice in the state. When the Britishers were forced to hand over the control of the Sikh shrines to the Akali Dal, Mahatma Gandhi sent the following telegram to Baba Kharak Singh: 'First battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations'!

The role played by the Akal Takht in the country's struggle for

freedom cannot be minimised. In 1947, at the time of the partition, the Akal Takht provided refuge to thousands of refugees, who were given food and shelter irrespective of their caste and creed. The *Darbar Sahib* has its doors open on all four sides denoting that it is open to all who come there to worship or to seek solace.

After 1947, the Akal Takht continued to capture the centre-stage of Sikh politics. *Morcha* for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state, 'Save Democracy *Morcha*' against the infamous Emergency (1975) and the *Dharm Yudh Morcha* (1982) for the restoration of the rights of Punjab were launched, organised and conducted from the premises of the Akal Takht. 'Save Democracy *Morcha*' was the most sustained and vigorous agitation against the Emergency, and won thunderous applause from all lovers of democracy who never questioned the use of Akal Takht for political purposes. It is only recently that the theo-political status of the shrine has been made the subject of an unsavoury controversy.

Akal Takht stands as a living monument of the spiritual yearnings and the socio-political objectives that have shaped the dynamic Sikh people and animated them during the past few centuries. All Sikh movements, whether religious or political, which have attained any substantial measure of success, have been planned, launched and spearheaded from here. It has been the nerve-centre of Sikh politics. Forces emanating from here have caused not just ripples but great tides in the political ocean of this region. It is significant to note that before independence, the Congress never questioned the Sikh doctrine of inseparability of religion and politics.

The Sikhs are the heirs of a great heritage. It is unfortunate that calculated attempts are being made to cut the Sikhs off from the springs of this heritage. The historic role played by the Sikhs as liberators of the land, with Akal Takht, as a visible symbol of their dauntless spirit, has not received due recognition. Free India should have looked upon Akal Takht as a sacred monument worthy of reverence. But Indian polity has failed to establish its credentials as a dispenser of justice and fair play. In Punjab, attention is being diverted away from the politico-economic issues which, in fact, form the core of the problem.

The crisis that has shaken Punjab is the direct outcome of the discriminatory and ill-conceived policies pursued by the government — policies aimed at eroding the Sikh identity and destroying the Sikh ethos. The destruction of the Akal Takht by the Indian armed forces was an act of such high-handedness that even an alien government like the British could never dream of. It was a calculated move to destroy the fountain-head of Sikh power. All recent controversies centred around the Akal Takht, are nothing but the nefarious designs of the vested interests to erode the ideological base and supremacy of the Akal Takht in temporal matters.

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AKAL TAKHT – CONCEPT OF MIRI-PIRI

Giani Bachittar Singh

The concept of *miri-piri* is fundamental to Sikhism. Guru Nanak, the prophet of Sikhism, had propounded the fundamental of *miri-piri* in his writings very succinctly, and Guru Hargobind translated this concept of *miri* and *piri*, purity of spiritual and temporal life into living. After he wore two *kirpans* (swords), to represent both *miri* and *piri*, he was formally taken by Sikhs to be the real Emperor or the *Sacha Patshah*, which even the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, is reported to have accepted. After the formation of the Khalsa Panth at Anandpur Sahib in 1699, the sword was included in the five *kakkas*, making the wearing of *kirpan* compulsory. Thus, the sword became part and parcel of the Sikh religion. During the British rule, the right of wearing *kirpan* was recognised. After the partition, while framing the Constitution of India, Article 25, "Freedom of conscience and free profession, Practice and propagation of religion" was inserted, giving Sikhs the right of wearing *kirpans*. Exception-I of this article reads, "The wearing and carrying of *kirpans* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of Sikh religion." In Explanation - I, the word *kirpans*, plural has been inserted and not *kirpan*, singular. As Guru Hargobind wore two *kirpans* at his installation as Guru, the use of 'plural' is significant.

CONCEPT OF MIRI-PIRI DISTINGUISHED

The concept of *miri-piri*, initiated by Guru Nanak, to which final demonstrations were given by Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh, distinguishes it from other religions. According to *Varn Ashram Dharam* the power of *piri* was bestowed upon the Brahmin and *miri* on the *Kshatriya*, but in Sikhism both the powers have been combined and vested in the Akal Takht. The *jathedar* is a functionary of Akal Takht through whom the temporal and spiritual powers are exercised. In "The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism", edited by Dr Harbans Singh, the formation and the account of the powers of *miri-piri* exercised by the Akal Takht have been given as under:

"AKAL TAKHT is the primary seat of Sikh religious authority and central altar for Sikh political assembly. Through *hukamnamas*, edicts or writs, it may issue decretals providing guidance or clarification on any point of Sikh doctrine or practice referred to it, may lay under penance personages charged with violation of religious discipline or with activity prejudicial to Sikh interests or solidarity and may place on record its appreciation of outstanding services rendered or sacrifices made by individuals espousing the cause of Sikhism or of the Sikhs. The edifice stands in the Darbar Sahib precincts in Amritsar facing Harimandar, now famous as the Golden Temple. The word *akal*, a negative of *kal* (time), is the equivalent of timeless, beyond time, everlasting, and *takht* in Persian, that of royal throne or chair of state. Akal Takht would thus mean 'timeless or everlasting throne' or 'throne of the Timeless One, i.e., God'. In the Sikh system, God is postulated as Formless (*Nirankar*), yet to proclaim His sovereignty over His creation, He is sometimes referred to as *sultan*, *patshah*, *sachcha shah*, or the True King; His seat is referred to as *sacha takht*, the True Throne, sitting on which, He dispenses *sacha niao*, true justice, (G.G. 84, 1087). It also became common for Sikhs, at least by the time of Guru Arjun (1563-1606), to refer to the Guru as *sachcha patshah* and to his *gaddi* or spiritual seat as *takht* and the congregation he led as *darbar* or court. Panegyricizing the Gurus, the bards Balvand, Nalya and Mathura, in their verses included in Guru Granth Sahib, use the word *takht* in this very sense. Formally to proclaim Sikh faith's common concern for the spiritual and the wordly synthesis of *miri* and *piri*, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), son and successor of Guru Arjun Dev, adopted royal style. For the ceremonies of succession, he had a platform constructed opposite the Harimandar, naming it Akal Takht. According to *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi*, a detailed versified and, going by the year of composition recorded in the text/colophon, the oldest account of Guru Hargobind's life, the structure was raised on *Har vadi* 5, 1663 Bk/15 June 1606. The Guru laid the cornerstone and Bhai Budha and Bhai Gurdas completed the construction, no third person being allowed to lend a helping hand. Guru Hargobind used the takht for the accession ceremonies which, according to the source quoted, took place on 26th *Har sudi* 10, 1663 Bk/24 June 1606. From here he conducted the secular affairs of the community. From here he issued the first *hukamnama* (q.v.) to farflung *sangats* or Sikh centres announcing the creation of

Akal Takht and asking them to include in their offerings thenceforth gifts of weapons and horses. Bhai Gurdas was named officiant in charge of the Akal Takht. A building subsequently raised over the Takht was called Akal Bunga (house), so that the Takht is now officially known as Takht Sri Akal Bunga although its popular name Akal Takht is more in common use.

"The Sikhs recognise four other holy places as *takhts*, namely Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Anandpur; Takht Sri Patna Sahib, Takht Sachkhand Huzur Sahib, Abchal Nagar, Nanded, and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo. All four are connected with the life of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). All five Takhts are equally venerated, but the Akal Takht at Amritsar, enjoys a special status. Historically, this is the oldest of the takhts and alongwith the Harimandar, across the yard, constitutes the capital of Sikhism. Meetings of Sarbat Khalsa or general assembly representative of the entire Panth are traditionally summoned at Akal Takht and it is only there that cases connected with serious religious offences committed by prominent Sikhs are heard and decided. *Hukamnamas* or decrees issued by the Akal Takht are universally applicable to all Sikhs and all institutions."

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ACCOUNT OF POWERS OF MIRI-PIRI EXERCISED

1. Before Guru Arjun Dev became a martyr, he sent a message to his son, Hargobind to don the mantle of both *miri* (temporal authority) and *piri* (divine stewardship). Accordingly, Guru Hargobind asked for two swords at the hour of his installation, one sword to safeguard the spiritual well-being of the community and the other to ensure its worldly welfare. According to Hari Ram Gupta, the renowned writer of Sikh history, Guru Hargobind emerged as "a saint, a sportsman and a soldier". Guru Hargobind and the four Gurus following him, maintained a regular army, built forts, fought fourteen battles with the Mughals and vanquished the Imperial forces twelve times.

2. Akal Takht was installed opposite the Harimandar emphasizing the co-existence of *miri* and *piri*. The Harimandar stood for spiritual pursuits, while the Akal Takht symbolised the temporal concerns. Guru Hargobind made it a point to grace the Akal Takht, when he attended problems relating to property, social conflicts, etc. A stage

came when people ceased to address complaints to the Mughal courts, and lodged applications and complaints with the Akal Takht.

3. Bhai Gurdas was the first custodian of Akal Takht appointed by Guru Hargobind, and Bhai Budha was custodian of Adi Granth at Harimandar. While *Gurbani* was recited in the precincts of the Harimandar, ballads aimed at inspiring devotees to heroic deeds, were sung by professional *dhadis* at the Akal Takht. Abdullah and Natha Mal were two popular ballad singers of the day. In early 1613, Guru Hargobind was interned at Gwalior. He was in prison for seven years and not two years, as recent research reveals, and was released at the end of October, 1619 at the intervention of Mian Mir. Bhai Gurdas had been entrusted with the day-to-day administration of Akal Takht affairs, including social and political matters.

4. To start with, Gurm Hargobind had a unit of fifty-two security guards, but soon a platoon of 500 soldiers equipped with muskets, matchlocks, bows and arrows, and other weapons came into existence. This was divided into four divisions, i.e., Advance Party with Bhai Langhah as commander, Guerrilla Warriors under Bhai Bidhi Chand, Surveyor Unit under Bhai Piara, and the storage and distribution of ration and supplies unit.

5. After Guru Hargobind fought his last battle with the *Subedar* of Jalandhar, he settled at Kiratpur. Harimandar and Akal Takht were occupied by Prithi Chand's son Meharban, who was in the good books of the Mughal *Darbar*. The seventh and the eighth gurus, Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkishan, never visited Amritsar. Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth guru, undertook a pilgrimage to Harimandar and Akal Takht, but Prithi Chand's grandson Harji locked the premises and disappeared. The Guru waited for some time, took bath in the *sarovar* and left to a nearby village. He never visited Amritsar again, nor did Guru Gobind Singh do so. Harimandar and Akal Takht remained in the custody of usurpers, successors of Prithi Chand and Meharban.

6. Immediately after the creation of the Khalsa in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh deputed Bhai Mani Singh with five prominent Sikhs to go to Amritsar and take charge of Harimandar and Akal Takht from Prithi Chand's successors. After taking charge of the Akal Takht and Harimandar, Bhai Mani Singh continued to control and maintain the

sanctity of the shrines, though political conditions were far from conducive.

7. After Guru Gobind Singh passed away in 1708, the line of living gurus ceased. *Hukamnamas* were issued in the name of the Khalsa from different *takhts*, especially Akal Takht. Any Sikh transgressing the religious code could be summoned, and asked to explain his conduct and punished. Disobedience amounted to social ostracism of the individual or the group concerned.

8. Even after Banda Bahadur was captured and martyred in Delhi by Abdul Samad Khan, the Governor of Punjab, when Sikhs were being hunted and threatened, they continued calling *Sarbat Khalsa* meetings on occasions of *Baisakhi* and *Diwali* at Akal Takht under its stewardship, and took decisions which were known as *gurmattas*.

9. In 1726, Zakria Khan succeeded his father Samad Khan as Governor of Punjab, and this period was the worst for the Sikhs when several heads were exhibited in Pyramids at Nakhas (later known as Sahid Ganj) at Lahore. The Sikhs' determination chastised Zakria Khan, and the Mughal Administration decided to purchase peace with the defiant Sikh brotherhood. In 1733, on *Baisakhi* festival, a Mughal emissary negotiated with *Sarbat Khalsa* at Akal Takht, offering them a fairly substantial sum in cash, a number of villages as *jagir* and office of a *Nawab*.

10. After the Nawabship was bestowed on S. Kapur Singh by the Panth, the Sikhs surfaced from their hideouts, met at Akal Takht and reorganised themselves into *Dal Khalsa*, having two divisions, *Budha Dal* commanded by S. Kapur Singh and *Tarana Dal* consisting of youngsters. This had the approval of Mata Sundri, who advised that in future all issues relating to the Sikh polity be referred to the Akal Takht under the stewardship of Bhai Mani Singh. This arrangement did not last long, as Bhai Mani Singh was arrested and martyred in 1734.

11. In 1748, Ahmed Shah Abdali started his series of attacks on India. To face these attacks, the *Sarbat Khalsa* met on *Baisakhi* at Akal Takht and elected S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as their Chief Commander. On this occasion, the *Dal Khalsa* was divided into two divisions. In March, 1757, Ahmed Shah Abdali defiled Akal Takht, demolished Harimandar, and choked fully the *sarovar* with slaughtered cows. Baba Deep Singh, a legendary Sikh hero, succeeded in freeing

the Akal Takht and Harimandar.

12. During the 18th century, it was virtually the Akal Takht that determined the Sikh polity, and shaped the strategies of the Sikh struggle for survival through the institution of *Sarbat Khalsa*. After the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in Delhi in 1716, the Sikhs again looked up to Akal Takht for inspiration in the unending fights with the Mughals and Pathans.

13. During the regime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Akali Phula Singh, *jathedar* of Akal Takht decided to punish Maharaja Ranjit Singh for violation of the Sikh code of conduct. The Maharaja surrendered before the Akal Takht to receive the punishment, which was converted into heavy fine in view of his humility.

14. In 1809, Holkar, a Maratha Chief chased by Lord Lake of the East India Company, sought refuge in the Punjab. The Sikhs met at the Akal Takht as *Sarbat Khalsa* and passed a *gurmatta* granting refuge to him. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, however, tactfully declined, since he suspected that Holkar was hobnobbing with the Pathans, and was not sincere to the Khalsa. Sikh history would have looked different, had the Maharaja not over-ruled the *gurmatta* passed by the Sikhs, and the mighty Sikh Empire would not have collapsed within ten years of his death, in 1839.

15. After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, corrupt elements found their way into the management of the Sikh shrines. This led to distrust and unrest amongst Sikh intellectuals. They started a movement to bring reforms in the management of gurdwaras, and to restore the Sikh way of life. As a result, the *Singh Sabha* in 1873 and the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* in 1901 came into being. The affairs of the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple during the tenure of Roor Singh Sarbrah deteriorated to the extent that he, in connivance with the hereditary *masands*, had the temerity to present a *saropa* to the perpetrator of the Jallian Wala Bagh massacre, General Dyre, at the Akal Takht. This infuriated the Sikhs, who launched a *morcha* to get the Sikh shrines freed from the *mahants*. The movement was launched on 12th October, 1920. On 15th November, 1920, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (non-official) was formed comprising 175 members to manage the affairs of the gurdwaras. Thereafter, all the agitations were organised and directed under the aegis of Akal Takht,

whether it was the "Keys Morcha" or "Guru Ka Bagh Morcha" or 'Jaito da Morcha'.

16. After the British Government handed over the shrines to the Sikhs Panth, S. Teja Singh Bhuchar was elected the first *jathedar* of the Akal Takht.

17. When in 1896-97, a controversy over the installation of electric power in the Harimandar arose, a *gurmatta* was passed at Akal Takht that the installation will not impair the sanctity of the shrines.

18. *Hukamnamas* have also been issued by Akal Takht from time to time, to settle points of religious and political disputations, commending the services to the Panth of individuals, and for adding passages to *Ardas*, the daily prayer or supplication, and to meet demands of particular historical situations. It is necessary to mention here that Guru Hargobind used to issue *hukamnamas* on different occasions.

In 1924, a *gurmatta* was passed at Akal Takht eulogizing the services of Dr Saif-u-din Kitchlu, who had offered *satyagraha* and had been jailed for a month during *Jaito da Morcha*.

On 26th *Jeth*, 1984 (BK, 8th June, 1927), the Akal Takht eulogized in a *hukamnama*, Bhai Sahib Sardar Kharak Singh for his determination and steadfastness and for his sacrifices in the cause of the Panth. Like wise, on 30th *Bhadon*, 1988 (BK, 15th September, 1931), Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh was honoured for his outstanding services to the Panth. On 12th *Magh*, 483, *Nanak Shahi* (25th January, 1952), Akal Takht enjoined upon the entire Khalsa and all gurdwara ministers to add these lines to the *Ardas*:

"O Timeless Lord, the Benevolent one, ever the succour of the Panth, we pray, grant to Khalsa the privilege of unhindered access to and control and maintenance of Sri Nankana Sahib and other holy shrines and sites from which the Panth has been separated (after partition of Punjab in 1947)."

Such writs promulgated under the seal of Akal Takht carry sanction of the entire Sikh Panth (The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, p. 50).

19. Babu Teja Singh Bhasaur, who was taking liberties with Sikh canon, was censured and punished. A *hukamnama* issued from

Akal Takht on 26th Sawan, 1985, (BK, 9th August, 1928) reads:

"The *Panch Khalsa Diwan* (*Panch Khand*), Bhasaur has published books called 'Gurmukhi Courses', in which the *bani* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib has been garbled and its order changed. Changes have been made in *gurmatta*, the *Ardas*. These are anti-Sikh proceedings. Hence, Babu Teja Singh and Bibi Niranjan Kaur (his wife) are hereby excommunicated from the Panth. The other members of the *Panch Khalsa Diwan* are debarred from having *Ardas* offered on their behalf at Sri Akal Takht Sahib or at any other gurdwara. No Sikh should purchase 'Gurmukhi Courses' published by the *Panch Khalsa Diwan*, nor keep them in their possession. The *Panch Khalsa Diwan* or anyone else who has any copies, should send these to Sri Akal Takht Sahib."

20. After the partition of the country in 1947, Akalis were disillusioned with the Government. All the *morchas* launched by the *Shiromani Akali Dal* between 1947-1974 were launched from Akal Takht, which remained the pivotal centre. During the Punjabi Suba agitation in 1955, the police entered the Golden Temple premises. This high-handedness angered the entire Sikh Community all over the world. Shri Bhim Sen Sachar, the then Chief Minister, presented himself before the Akal Takht on 10th November, 1955 and offered his apology.

21. Akali leaders like Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh, Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, and S. Surjit Singh Barnala, were also punished by the *Akal Takht*.

22. The Akalis launched a *morcha* against the infamous emergency in 1975, from the precincts of Akal Takht. Shri Jay Parkash Narayan hailed the Akalis as the "Last bastion of democracy."

23. The Akal Takht blazed a trail when on 10th June, 1978, it passed a *gurmatta*, excommunicating the entire *Nirankari* faction led by Baba Gurbachan Singh, as they were responsible for the massacre of 13 Sikh devotees who had gone to argue with them over their preaching against the Sikh Gurus and distorting the Sikh Scripture.

24. Operation Blue Star was the worst tragedy to befall the Harimandar and Akal Takht in over 300 years, when they were

desecrated by the Indian Army in June, 1984. The destruction of the Akal Takht and gunning of the Harimandar and other buildings of the Golden Temple Complex horrified and enraged Sikhs all over the world. Operation Blue Star revived the sad memories of the invasions of Nadar Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali.

25. In 1993, a Sikh scholar, Pashaura Singh was punished by the Akal Takht for challenging the originality and authenticity of *bani* enshrined in the Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Recently, Buta Singh, the Central Minister, who had been excommunicated after Operation Blue Star, was also punished. He faithfully served the sentence. Jathedar Rachhpal Singh was also punished by the Akal Takht. He appeared before the Akal Takht in 1994, but left without serving punishment. In the recent Delhi Sikh Gurdwara elections, he lost his security deposit alongwith his candidature. Sikh *sangat* punished him because he is a "bhagaura" of the Akal Takht.

26. The latest is the historical step taken by the Akal Takht, to unite the fighting Akali factions. Many eyebrows were raised about this step. The Jathedar of Akal Takht was simply discharging the temporal responsibilities of this institution as had been done during the times of Bhai Mani Singh and Akali Phula Singh, in the best interests of the Panth.

27. As regards *piri* (spiritual) aspect of Akal Takht's powers for excommunication, the Supreme Court of India, in a judgement reported in AIR 1962 SC 853, held:

"Faith in spiritual mission and the efficacy of ministration is one of the bonds that hold the community as a unit. The power of excommunication is vested in him for the purpose of enforcing discipline and keeping the déaomination together as an entity. The purity of fellows is secured by the removal of persons who had rendered themselves unfit and unsuitable for the membership of the community. The power for excommunication for the purpose of ensuring the preservation of the community has, therefore, a prime significance in the religious life of every member of the community."

So, even the Highest Court of the land endorses the action taken by Akal Takht to excommunicate persons who render themselves

unfit and unsuitable for membership of the Sikh Panth.

28. Regarding *miri* (temporal) powers of Akal Takht, lawyers and politicians, ignorant of the historical background of Akal Takht, cited a recent Judgement passed by Supreme Court in a case, S.R. Bommai Vs. Union of India reported as AIR 1994, p. 1918, in which a bench of 9 judges held that the manifesto of a Political Party must not be inconsistent with the basic features of the Constitution and the political parties must maintain neutrality towards Religious beliefs.

29. But, the Supreme Court of India in a judgement passed in July, 1995, by the Division Bench comprising Mr. Justice A.N. Ray and Mr. Justice Faiz-u-din, held that political parties which are identified with a particular caste, community, religion or language, can seek votes to promote their cause without creating hatred against their adversaries. This judgement passed by the Highest Court of the land will have far-reaching consequence.

30. The *jathedar* of Akal Takht, in deciding religious, social, or political issues, or while resolving wrangles between squabbling factions of the Sikhs, always acts on the advice of the *Panj Piaras* (five beloved), or a *gurmatta* issued as a *hukamnama* with the signatures of the *Panj Piaras* and the seal of Akal Takht.

31. There is no inhibition for the Sikhs to get-together and to unite themselves, and this is a legitimate activity associated with religious practices fully protected under Article 25(1) of the Constitution of India, and it is a fundamental right which even the Parliament cannot change as confirmed in several court cases.

32. Khalsa Panth Assembly held under the auspices of Akal Takht to pass a *gurmatta* has been described differently by different scholars writing on the Sikh way of life. James Brown and George Forster call it "Diet" or "Grand Diet" or "Grand Convention". Cunningham calls it "Assembly of chiefs". C.H. Penn has given it the name of "National Council".

33. A *gurmatta* can relate to any sphere of activity of the Sikh community. It could even dictate to the Guru to act the way the *Panj Piaras* would have him do. Guru Gobind Singh left Chamkaur Sahib on December 22, 1704 in response to a *gurmatta*. It could be political

in nature elevating some one to lead the Panth. Sardar Kapur Singh and subsequently S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia were nominated as Chiefs, by a *gurmatta* adopted at Akal Takht. It could even be the consideration of an offer made by the Government of the day, for example, the way the Governor of Punjab, Zakria Khan sought peace with the Khalsa Panth. Accepting his offer, S. Kapur Singh was made the *Nawab* in 1733. Through a *gurmatta*, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was allowed to attack Lahore. At times, *gurmattas* embodied strategies to be adopted in the *morchas* or policies to be adopted in the fights against the adversaries. *Gurmattas* were also passed to punish the errant members of the Sikh Panth. (Reference: K.S. Duggal, "The Akal Takht and other Seats of Sikh Polity").

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ROLE OF MIRI-PIRI IN MODERN SOCIETY

S.S. Narang

Since *miri-piri* is a sole Sikh doctrine, we ought to glance briefly at the fundamental principles of Sikhism. In order to comprehend it concisely, I have divided it into three parts. In the first part, an effort has been made to give a bird's eye-view of the basic fundamentals of Sikhism. In the second part, I have tried to define the main characteristics of the *miri-piri* concept. In the third and final part, an attempt has been made to evaluate the scope of *miri-piri* in the social milieu of a sophisticated society of the modern age.

No religion can be a full and final cognition of divinity. No single path, no single route, no single road, no single direction, or no single door has the monopoly of access to the Ultimate Reality. No single idealism, no single system and no single doctrine can be an overall panacea for all people, in all times and in all countries. Any such claim of this nature is foreign to Sikhism. The modern world is getting closer and closer. Man of today is getting busier and busier. He has no time to waste on senseless rituals, dogmas and *smadhis*. Modern man wants a religion which understands the aspirations of all the citizens of the world; a religion which protects the human society from social and moral degradation, and restores the basic universal values; a religion which is above caste, race, creed and country; a religion which teaches how to live a life of fullness; above all, a cosmopolitan religion of love, service and sacrifice.

GENESIS

Sikhism is a new, original and genuinely monotheistic religion. Its contribution to the world religious thought has been dynamic and unique. Guru Nanak gave mankind a new brand of religion — a new way of life; a new society; a new social order with new social principles and institutions, which are concerned with the 'now and here' in this very life. The concept of social order as envisaged in Sikhism is that of an egalitarian society laced with ethical divinity. Sikhism inspires man

to lead life akin to the law of nature, thereby enabling him to contribute his assigned share, like everything else of the universe, in upkeeping this cosmic order. Sikhism champions the freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of action. It has open doors to all men and women, and looks upon them as brothers and sisters. No rituals, no dogmas, no false promises of heavens/*suarg/bahishat*, no scaring of hell/*dozakh/nark*. The Sikh Highway (*Gaadi-Rah*) is open to everyone irrespective of caste, colour, creed or country. It was a new dawn, a new era, a new vision and a new outlook the world had ever seen.

1. SIKHISM

1.1 Sikhism is a wholly new, sovereign, original and monotheistic religion from day one. For the first time, Guru Nanak stated very clearly and very precisely the oneness of God, at the very opening of the divine *Gurbani*. Guru Granth Sahib is the only holy book in the religious world, which begins with a clear, precise, and comprehensive perception of One God. In this respect, I would like to cite a few lines from the analytical conclusion reached by an eminent scholar, philosopher and linguist in his foreword to "Sikh Way of Life"; by S. Ranbir Singh:

"So we can say that only two world religions have been completely and strictly monotheistic from the very start, first Islam and second Sikhism, all the other religions have at least flirted with polytheism".

Dr A. de Littercourt, Ph.D. (Santiago) Litt. D., (Michigan)

According to Sikh perception, God is all love. His Will is attributive, creative and gracious. He is nurturing His creation all the time. He is without enmity and hate. This contrasts with the Semitic concept, where loving God is full of enmity, full of wrath, wreaking vengeance on all but the chosen people. Islam, the firm believer of one God, can see God only in *momins* and cannot see Him in *kafirs* (non-muslims). Sikhism does not agree with the Islamic view of God's abode in the seventh sky. For Sikhs, God does not reside in the seventh or fourteenth sky or any other place far from the earth. God lives in the hearts of human beings, and, above all, there is no place without Him.

As far as Hinduism is concerned, it is not one simple religion.

The beliefs in its folds, are as numerous and varied as at least its followers. It has within itself all types of diverse religions such as theism, atheism, Dwaitism, Adwaitism, Saivism, Vaishnavism, etc., contradictory to one another. They are not alike and counter one another at many points. The only common feature in Hinduism is the caste system. It is the main pillar of Hindu society on which all sects of Hinduism are united. Hinduism claims to contain seeds of monotheism but the fact is that Hindus, even today, are worshippers of stone images and idols of various gods, goddesses and deities. They even worship snakes, cows, rats, trees, sun, moon, rivers and wealth (*Laxmi*), etc. as well. As long as there is the caste system in Hinduism, the social laws of Manu will be there, and the belief of "*Avtarvad*", Hinduism cannot be a monotheistic religion. The reality is that Hinduism has always been, and even today is a polytheistic religion, whereas Sikhism is a pure monotheistic religion. It has a totally different philosophy from that of Hinduism. There is nothing common at all between the two.

In a nutshell, Sikhism is rigidly monotheistic. It does not believe in polytheism at all; it does not allow worship of gods, goddesses, or other deities. It is against all kind of idol worship, ritualism, dogmas, asceticism, "*Avtarvad*" and caste system which are the main features of Hinduism. Besides, all kinds of superstition, fasting, absolving of sins by bathing in the Ganges, and priesthood (Brahminism), etc. are all dispensed with.

1.2 Guru Nanak laid down the foundation of a new individual, a new society and a new nation. He aimed to achieve a casteless and classless society in which all were equal in all aspects of life; and where one member did not exploit others. It was Guru Nanak who raised the banner of revolt against the millennium old caste system and caste tyranny of Brahminism. In order to eradicate caste restrictions, caste prejudices and the cancer of untouchability from the Indian society, he introduced two new social institutions, i.e., *sangat* and *pangat*, where people sit together, pray together and eat together. Gurdwaras are open to men and women alike, for all castes and creeds without any discrimination. It was a revolutionary change; a revolutionary vision and a revolutionary social order in a caste ridden society. The concept of social order as envisaged in Sikhism, is that of an egalitarian society with added zeal of divinity. Sikhism rejects all distinction of caste, colour and creed; it stands for the "fatherhood of God" and the

"brotherhood of man", not in creed only but in deeds as well.

1.3 The Sikh religion is the latest and most modern religion of the world. It is a practical way of life. Unlike other major religions of the world, it does not confine itself to spirituality only, but deals also with the social, economic and political aspects of life. The amazing synthesis of spiritual, socio-economic, political, philosophical thoughts, and their assimilation in Sikhism is a unique new concept, and its arrival has been a revolution in the religious world. The fundamental concepts of Sikhism and its philosophy were expounded by Guru Nanak and elaborated by his successor Gurus.

1.4 Another uniqueness of Sikhism is that it is concerned with the salvation 'now and here' in this very life itself, and not after death in some unknown heaven or hell, as is the case with other major religions of the world. Its spiritual bliss is attainable here in this very life, and not after death. In any case, Sikhism does not believe in the existence of imaginary heavens or hells. In it, there are no promises of heaven, '*bahisht*' or '*swarg*'; no promises of fairies of paradise; and no frightening of hell, '*dosakh*' or '*nark*'. Sikhism has brought a new vision of life, and a new way to achieve this vision through a householder's life. It has disclosed a new cosmic way of life lived for others, that makes it possible to attain salvation, even while one is engaged in working, eating, playing, smiling and enjoying oneself.

1.5 On a sociological level, Sikhism has heralded a new revolutionary outlook on life; a universal pattern of global society and a new social commitment towards full blooded life. Its spirituality is to be lived in virtuous activities and deeds, as one's assessment in His Divine court is done on the basis of one's deeds (as you sow, so shall you reap). It is through one's deeds that one gets nearer or away from God. Rightful performance of one's duty is the virtuous deed. In Sikhism deeds are more important than the creed. Selfless service (*sewa*) is as important as *simran* (Sikh way of worship) itself. Ethics are the very basis and important component of Sikh spirituality. Ethics are not only the key to the spiritual attainment of the individual, it is also a worthy way of life saturated with the discipline of virtuous acts and the vision of universal human welfare. Morality and spirituality in Sikhism both aim at shaping an ideal human life; without the practice of moral deeds spiritual attainment is impossible. Virtuous deeds only can make one a

true human being. True living has been given a very high place in *Gurbani*:

"Truth is the highest virtue
But truthful living is higher still."

1.6 The contribution of Sikh thought to mankind has been dynamic and unique. It is a religion of love, equality, service and sacrifice. The concepts of love, equality and service are well placed in other major religions of the world, but in Sikhism, selfless service (*sewa*) is as important as *simran* itself. The two are intertwined with each other, one without the other is incomplete. As far as the concept of sacrifice for righteousness is concerned, it is totally and solely a new concept of Sikhism. It aims at selfless service for others, and its ultimate goal is, if it need be, self sacrifice for the protection of others' rights. This is the main driving force of the Khalsa (Sikh ideal man) which corresponds with the universal law of nature. Man is part of this universe; logically, the nature of man ought to be that of the universe.

1.7 The Sikh religion is the art of living a flower-like life; a life of fullness; a life of vigour, vitality and valour; a life of selfless service and a life of sacrifice for others. One has to lead a purposeful cosmic life like a flower which germinates, grows, blossoms and emits its fragrance, sweetness and happiness all around selflessly. One has to devote one's life to the service of the people, since service of the people is the service of God. Service of His creation is the best way of working in harmony with the Divine Will. In Sikhism selfless service is a part of the daily worship. Gurdwaras are spiritual laboratories, where service is actually practised as a daily routine to prepare for the service of the whole of mankind.

1.8 Another fundamental importance for the Sikh way of life is that each individual is required to play his role. As long as the universe is there and the Will of God is there, the activities and the duties will continue. A Sikh has to carry out the attributive and creative Will of God, i.e., life is to be lived in full in all respects but in the context of the law of the universe. A religion, if it is to be a living force, and not a mere verbose theory, should teach how to live a worthy balanced life in the world, and not how to escape from it. In this context, Sikhism is a staunch world affirming householder philosophy compared to Hinduism, which is based on a philosophy of renunciation, negation and

passiveness.

The negative philosophy of renunciation, self denial and non-violence of Hindu India had demoralised and made people impotent and helpless. Physical austerities, renunciation, self torturing, self denial, abandoning of home and family have no relevance in modern society. Renunciation means confession of failure and running away from a householder's responsibilities like a run-away soldier from the battlefield. It is an unhealthy outlook, anti-social and anti-cosmic as well. Due to this negative philosophy, more than a million idlers, parasites and beggars have become an undue burden on today's society. This world, for a Sikh, is neither an illusion, unreal or *mithya*, nor a place of sufferings, pain and sorrow, as assumed by Hinduism, or a place of mere enjoyment as believed by others. Sikhism also rejects the postulate that life has a sinful origin and evil is inherent in it. Instead, it regards this life as a splendid gift of God to be lived in a new natural way, i.e., remaining detached while leading a householder's life. It was a new idea, a new message and a new outlook for the caste-ridden and ignorant society. It took a long time for the seed to germinate, grow and fructify.

1.9 Two hundred and ninety six years ago, Guru Gobind Singh accomplished the Khalsa mission initiated by Guru Nanak by creating the ultimate form of an ideal Sikh, i.e., the Khalsa. It was the logical development of the step by step teachings and nurturing by the preceding nine Gurus. In order to accomplish his mission, Guru Nanak's divine light had to travel in ten habiliments, and in every new physical garb he taught a new lesson. Guru Nanak was the architect of the blueprint of the Khalsa. He himself laid down the tough conditions for the admission into this order:

"Shouldst thou seek to engage in the game of love,
Step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm:
While on to this stepping,
Ungrudgingly sacrifice your head."

SGGS, p. 1412

In the first phase of the Khalsa mission, the primary saintly qualities, such as equality, humility, selfless sacrifice, devotion, mercy, submission and tolerance were firmly infused through the concept of *simran* and *sewa*. At the end of the first phase, the Fifth Master taught a very important lesson by offering his martyrdom. That was God's Will,

and the divine plan must have its way, even if one has to sit on a red hot plate and in boiling water. Righteousness must be held at every cost.

The second phase started with the training of the soldierly qualities of swordsmanship, horseriding, hunting, wrestling, regular drills and exercises, so that a saint becomes a soldier as well. The training course continued until the Ninth Master taught the last lesson by offering his martyrdom to save even others' freedom of religious faith, and not only his own. It was a sacrifice for the human rights and for the freedom of the oppressed people, irrespective of their creed, belief or ideology. It is the first time in the history of mankind, that any Prophet laid down his life for the freedom of a religion he did not believe in. When the training course was complete, then came the time of the test.

On the Baisakhi of 1699, Guru Gobind Singh gave a test to his Sikhs in a specially convened gathering. The Five Sikhs passed the test by offering their heads one by one on each call from their Guru, and they proved themselves to possess the required spirit of self-sacrifice and self-discipline. Thus, the five so selected, were initiated into the new order of the Khalsa by administering to them *Pauhal* (*amrit*). They were collectively called the 'five beloved ones' (*Panj Piaras*). This obliterated their previous caste, creed, and class distinction. He made the Sikh nation unique by introducing the unparalleled concept of one common name (*Singh*) for all men and one common name (*Kaur*) for all women of the Sikh nation.

1.10 When the initiation ceremony reached its climax, another new chapter opened for the first time in the history of mankind. The great guru, Guru Gobind Singh, in humility kneeled before his newly ordained *Panj Piaras*, the Khalsa, and requested them to initiate him into the order in the same manner. When he was initiated, he undertook to adhere exactly to the same pledges, same responsibilities and the same code of conduct as he had prescribed for his disciples. This is a unique event in the history of the world. Disciples have always remained disciples. No religious leader has ever asked his followers to initiate him into the faith of which he himself is the head. Thus, the Guru became disciple as well as Master — *Waho Waho Gobind Singh, Aape Gur Chela* — (Hail Hail Gobind Singh who is himself Guru as well as disciple.)

1.11 With this unique "*Aape Gur Chela*" concept, Guru Gobind Singh created an egalitarian system (unparalleled in the history of the religious world), by vesting in the *Panj Piaras* (five baptised Sikhs) the right to baptise others. In this way, the Khalsa became a self-generating and self-operating system, which could autonomously develop and expand. The Guru wanted to create a God-fearing Khalsa (army of God) which could uphold the banner of righteousness and defend the weak against injustice, tyranny and oppression, irrespective of their creed, caste or colour.

The Guru inspired the Khalsa with a sense of divine mission. Their souls were elated, and the constitution of their minds was altered, so that no fear of any earthly power could deflect them from their noble mission. What a divine force of *Pauhal*! What a magic! What a sensational touch! What a miracle of transformation! The creation of the Khalsa ushered in a new era of emancipation for the caste-ridden, low caste and downtrodden. Demoralised, degraded, and humiliated, the so called low castes became dauntless warriors; they fought against injustice, exploitation and oppression. The entire history of the Khalsa is filled with sacrifices for the sake of human rights, freedom and honour.

For this sacrificing spirit, Sikhs were ruthlessly persecuted; they were sawn alive into two, they were cut into pieces limb by limb, whilst still alive, they were crushed on spiked wheels. Despite such tortures inflicted on them, they upheld the banner of the Khalsa faith, Khalsa ideals and Khalsa *Panth*. Initiated daughters of Guru Gobind Singh also upheld the Khalsa's ideals along with their menfolk.

Who else but the Sikhs of the 18th century saved the honour of India, and won independence which she had never experienced since 1000 AD. Who else shaped the history of demoralised slave India? Who else stopped the invasions from the North and proved to the world that the Khalsa is the one who possesses the power to fight the aggressor and pay him back in the same coin? Who else has been the champion of the Green Revolution to feed the hungry masses of India? The Khalsa has always given a good account of itself in every walk of life. The whole credit goes to the great Tenth Master, who sacrificed everything for the Khalsa. Who else at the tender age of nine would counsel his father, the Ninth Master, to offer his martyrdom for the

oppressed Hindus? Whose else's sons were bricked alive? Who else would have directed his two minor sons to the battlefield against all odds, when death was a certainty? Who else could sacrifice his father, sons, mother, every other relation, nay every worldly possession, without any remorse whatsoever?

It was the Tenth Master who banned smoking, extra-marital relationship, and intoxicants for the Sikhs 296 years ago. As a result thereof, the Khalsa is the only nation of the world today, which is not the victim of smoke and sex related diseases. It was also the Tenth Master who founded the Red Cross system. More than 150 years before the concept of this system came into being, Bhai Kanhya, a devotee of the Tenth Master, was operating this system by offering water and medication in the battlefield to friend and foe alike.

2. MIRI-PIRI .

2.1 The exposition of the qualitative aspect of Sikh doctrine is rarely touched upon from the modern point of view, and its identity adequately brought out. Sikh thought has played a unique revolutionary role at the sociological level in restructuring human society on a cosmopolitan egalitarian basis. The sociological significance of "*amrit* initiation" lies in its wiping out the millennium old caste-ridden stigmas, infusion of brotherly spirit, and solemn declaration of equality, liberty and fraternity. It was an unparalleled historical feat the Sikh doctrine had achieved. It is the only bright epoch in an otherwise dark period that stretched over northern India for more than a millennium.

2.2 The uniqueness of Sikhism is that its doctrines and concepts laid down by its founders are neither a bundle of mythological and legendary stories nor castles built in the air. Instead, they are practical, and were actually put into practice by its founder Gurus themselves and their followers. Another distinctive feature of the Sikh tenets is that these correspond with the law of nature.

Let us, briefly, define the meanings of *miri* and *piri*. Both of these words originate from the Persian language. *Mir* means a ruler, a rich man, a king or the one who is in pursuit of mundanity. *Miri* is the symbol of worldly activities and virtues of political power, courage and bravery. *Pir* means a religious head, a holy man or a prophet. *Piri* represents the spiritual aspect of life and virtues such as love, compassion, humility and self-sacrifice, etc. *Miri* represents the physical,

material and worldly aspect of life whereas *piri* signifies the subtle and spiritual aspect of life.

Miri-piri is a new thought; a new outlook; a new genuine idea; a space age concept and an evergreen principle as long as this universe exists, it has to play its part. It is a special kind of co-related balance between the material pursuits and spiritual pursuits; an equipoise of earth-awareness and God consciousness; it represents the Sikh ideal of *bhakti* and *shakti* — saint-soldier; it is an equilibrium between humility and martial spirit; a balance between attachment and detachment; a balanced development of body and spirit. It is like two wings of a flying bird. It is a skillful cosmic way — while fully engaged in life to remain disengaged. Its balanced state (*sehaj avastha*) is the ideal combination of *miri-piri*.

2.3 Balanced state is the goal of the Sikh way of life; the ultimate aim of life; the climax of life and the ultimate attainment of salvation — *Jiwan Mukta*. The balanced state can never be achieved with either *miri* or *piri* alone; the presence of both is vital; their existence also depends upon one another. One without the other is incomplete and extreme. Let me illustrate this point further. Neither positive nor negative current on its own can provide and carry electricity. One without the other is incapable of providing power. Similarly, without the spirit, the body is dead; life is not possible. On the other hand, without body, the spirit cannot illuminate life. In the absence of either of the two, life cannot exist, just as without either water or heat, the existence of a tree is impossible. The same principle applies to everything of this universe. It was reserved for the genius, Guru Nanak, to discover the secrets of nature and show the world the natural way of life.

Miri without *piri*, and *piri* without *miri* is incomplete, extreme and unnatural. *Mir* without *piri* becomes unjust, selfish, tyrannical, ruthless oppressor, dictator, and *pir* without *miri* becomes weak, cowardly and dependent on the mercy of the *mir*, neither can he defend himself nor can he raise his voice against injustice. *Mir* and *pir* both have been exploiting the people for their own selfish ends; *mir* with the power of his sword and *pir* on the strength of his religious threat. Guru Nanak called the then oppressors, *mir*, as vicious tigers, and their functionaries as hounds who never let their subjects rest peacefully. In *Babar-Vani*, Guru Nanak used the terms *mir* and *pir* by exposing the atrocities of

Babar (*mir*) and the cowardly hypocrite (*pir*), whose prayers and spells failed to make the aggressor blind. As a result thereof, people had to suffer. The life of the average man had become a hell, unbearable and intolerable. "Might is right" was the law of the time.

2.4 It was Guru Nanak, who boldly stepped forward and called Babar a cruel aggressor, a merciless and a tyrannical ruler right in his face. Under such adverse circumstances, when he was opposed by the vast majority of orthodox Hindus as well as Muslims, Guru Nanak laid down the foundations of a new cosmic way of life; a new social order and new social institutions with a complete new vision, a fresh outlook and new social principles. His aim was not only individual salvation but also a society in which all were free and equal, without fear and exploitation. He wanted to create a balanced individual who, on the one hand becomes a part of the universe by participating in the activities of the life of the society (*mir*), and, on the other hand, he becomes God conscious (*pir*) as well.

2.5 Let us examine the role of *miri-piri* in the ideal man of Guru Nanak, i.e., the Khalsa. The order of the Khalsa is a society of saint-soldiers. The Sikhs voluntarily join it and dedicate their lives to the creation of a just and tolerant society. The order of the Khalsa is the first human society in the world organized with a specific cosmic object and pledge to bring about a cosmopolitan human society. The Khalsa is inspired with a divine mission, with a new spirit of selflessness, fearlessness and truthfulness. No earthly power can deflect them from their duty of upholding righteousness. It is the army of *Akal Purkh* ordained by Guru Gobind Singh to uphold the Will of God:

"For this purpose have I come into the world:
To uphold and spread righteousness,
To protect and save the good and saintly people,
And to destroy and uproot the villainous tyrant and evil doers."

Guru Gobind Singh

A saint-soldier has to protect the Order of God; Will of God; i.e., to protect the whole of mankind; to safeguard the interest of each and every one, irrespective of one's caste, colour and creed; to protect the weak, uproot the evil and fight injustice. He has to carry out the attributive and creative Will of God. As long as this universe is there, and the Will of God is in operation, he has a role to play and his activities

and duties will continue, because Khalsa is the army of God. Time has vindicated that it was the Khalsa — the army of saint-soldiers; an army of very high moral character; an embodiment of courage, that defended justice and freedom at the cost of their lives, families and properties.

2.6 The oppressed and the weak have to be defended. Evil is to be resisted and uprooted. In order to achieve this, the Khalsa had to be saint-soldiers, based on the *miri-piri (bhakti-shakti)* concept. For the first time in the history of mankind, the Tenth Master, the architect of the saint-soldier doctrine, restricted the use of the sword; changed the use of the destructive power of the sword from offensive to defensive purposes. It has to be used for the defence of human rights (self-defence, freedom of speech, freedom of worship and freedom of conscience), and that also only as a last resort when all other efforts have failed. The armed might is never to be used for the gratification of selfish or material gains. In this context, Guru Gobind Singh laid down another golden principle for all times to come:

"When all other alternatives fail,
it is right and just to take up the sword
for the defence of righteousness."

Guru Gobind Singh

The sword is never to be struck in hatred, anger or in a spirit of revenge. Instead, it has to be used as a shield to protect the weak and uphold righteousness. Just as a surgeon is first given all round body knowledge, before he is allowed to hold a knife for surgical training, similarly, it took the first five Masters 137 years training of saintly virtues, before the sword was given to the saint for a soldier's training as well. It took another 93 years to train the saint into soldier-ship, before it was brought to the order of the Khalsa, that too, after passing the hardest test. Just as, when all other medicines fail to cure, only then, as a last resort, a surgeon uses his knife to save the patient's life, in the same way, a saint-soldier uses his sword, as a last resort, when all other means are exhausted.

It was Guru Nanak who introduced the concept of resistance against injustice as a prime moral duty of a spiritualist. What is the use of such spirituality which would not inspire a person to resist the wrong with courage and boldness? Guru Nanak made it obligatory for a Sikh to resist and confront injustice and oppression, even if one has to

sacrifice one's own life. One must defend oneself against all political aggression with one's own efforts. It is a sin to let tyrants commit atrocities. One must not surrender before tyranny. A conscientious man cannot remain at ease, when his fellow beings are suffering before his eyes. It is better to die than to lead a life of a slave, who has no right of conscience and speech. An enlightened *mir* has to lead a fearless, dignified and independent life. The divine message of *Gurbani* is crystal clear:

- 1) Nor to frighten anyone,
Nor to fear anyone Sri Guru Granth Sahib
- 2) If one lives with honour lost,
Sinful is all that he eats. Sri Guru Granth Sahib
- 3) Lord, never may I depend on anyone else.
In case Thou willeth otherwise,
Then let my life come to end. Sri Guru Granth Sahib

2.7 The enlightened *mir* has to lead a householder's life; he must participate in all aspect of life; he must earn his living by honest and fair means and produce all prime necessities of life, and he should share the fruits of his labour with others, not as a charity but as a duty. *Kirt* is important on three accounts. Firstly, an empty stomach may not make a person morally strong. A straving person may barter away his religion, his morality and his self respect to fill his stomach. Secondly, one must not be a parasite on society. Idlers, parasites and beggars are a burden on society. Thirdly, in order to keep the body healthy and fit, it is vital that one should work; take care of one's body and use it for service of humanity. Above all, a healthy mind needs a healthy body. Besides, one must not try to grab somebody else's share; all possessions acquired through dishonest means and exploitation of labour are not only sinful but morally illegitimate as well. The *Gurbani* injunction against exploitation of labour is very strong:

"To exploit the rightful due of others,
is like eating the (forbidden).
Cow for one (Hindu) and swine
for the other (Muslim).
The Lord vouchsafes for those only
who are not usurpers." Sri Guru Granth Sahib

2.8 The ultimate aim of life for a saint-soldier is self realization. Self realization keeps one in a state of eternal bliss, not after death in some unknown region, but now and here, in this very life; one becomes self-realised and self-disciplined through participating in the social processes of society with ethical consciousness, social responsibility and political activity. The enlightened individual, in its highest attainment, becomes as wide and big a force as the universe itself; his heart begins to throb with the whole universe; he begins to love all living beings. On the one hand, he becomes a part of the universe by participating in the universe through the active life of the society, and on the other hand, he is God-conscious all the time. He lives in a special detached way, despite all worldly activities, he remains detached and aloof from it. His balanced state of mind is unaffected by the pleasures and pains of the world. He lives as a lotus lives in the water, remaining above its surface, or as a duck floats on the stream, but keeps its plumage dry, and remains ready all the time to take a flight away from the water. That is how a saint-soldier, while fully engaged in worldly activities remains disengaged. The secret lies in the balanced state (*sehaj avastha*). This balanced state or equipoise must not be underrated in the present age. It is the tenet of space age and it is the cure of all our social, economic and political problems.

3. BALANCED STATE

3.1 Science and technology have played a major role in shaping the modern world. New inventions, new discoveries and new technology have changed the whole structure of modern society. Science has done wonders in creating enormous wealth and body comforts on an unprecedented scale. It has improved immensely physical conditions, surroundings and economic standard of today's man. The modern world's glamour and glitter are associated with wealth, wine and sex. These are the most sought after pleasures of modern life. Wealth alone has an immense capacity to buy anything available in the market, which is the source of enjoyment. No wonder, everyone runs after it; and is ready to commit sin after sin to get it. The more one feeds one's insatiable hunger for wealth, the more it increases. Surprisingly, "haves" and "have nots" are both running alike in the never ending race for wealth.

Unlimited demands, greed, selfishness, and pride lead to social exploitation, which results in imbalances, dissatisfaction, boredom,

meaninglessness of life, ill health, depression and other such abnormalities of life. There is no such thing as shortage of wealth or body comforts in the western countries, but at the same time, base instincts like cruelty, violence, child abuse, heinous crimes and human suffering are multiplying everywhere in these countries. Where there is more wealth, there are more crimes, more alcoholism, more drug addictions, more adulteries and more divorces. No amount of wealth seems to satisfy the desires of modern man. He wants more, more and still more. It is an unappeasable hunger of mind which cannot be appeased by worldly goods. Its appetite increases as one feeds it, just as fire spreads further with added fuel. Even in a highly affluent society like that of America, it is now realised that wealth and power are not everything.

Educational establishments all over the world are churning out high earning professionals — doctors, educationists, engineers and scientists, — but not successful fathers, mothers, sisters, and above all, decent human beings. Those establishments are producing unbalanced human beings as money minting machines, which is the root cause of all social ills and domestic violence. Whereas there is more literacy in the western countries, there are also more burglaries, more smoking, more drinking, more heart diseases and more unhappiness. Where there are more advanced health clinics, more medicines are breeding more diseases in mankind, which are rarely seen in birds who lead a cosmic way of life. The root cause of all our social problems is an unbalanced man. A healthy body needs a healthy enlightened mind. All our research is being directed for the body's comforts only, and none for the soul; too much for the body and too little for the soul.

3.2 Today's world is on a dangerous course. Bluff and counter bluff is the dominant force prevalent everywhere. This world has become an arena of double standards. On the one hand, nuclear weapons are being produced, on the other hand, the same powers are on the forefront of negotiating nuclear non-proliferation and arms control treaties. The present unethical extreme course of *miri* is bound to lead mankind to ruination. It is the true religion alone that can save the modern society from such a catastrophe and check the erosion of human values. Religion and ethics humanise scientists and politicians and make them realise their social responsibilities. Moreover, evil or good actions start from the mind of a man, hence the need to enlighten man's mind — the sooner the better. The modern society is in need of spiritual enlightenment more than ever before. The balanced outlook on the material and spiritual aspects of life is the dire need of today. True

religion is the key to real happiness, which alone can harmonise the strings of impulses, desires and thoughts of modern *mir*.

The impulse towards religion is an integral part of human nature. It has always had a definite place in society, and will continue to play a vital role in this scientific age. Man may live in comfort, luxury and prosperity, and yet have no peace of mind. Wealth, body comforts and material goods are of immense value to mankind, but they are not everything. Without spiritual and moral foundations, science is apt to lead mankind to ruination. It has brought man to the brink of total destruction of civilization and annihilation of the human race. Man has achieved some mastery over nature but not over himself. Either man will abolish this one-sided extreme course, or this course of *mir* without *piri* will abolish man itself. Science and religion are complementary to each other. One deals with the physical aspect of life and the other with the spiritual aspect of life. One without the other is incomplete and extreme.

3.3 In spite of the space probe, man's intellect can never know the secrets of this universe. The secret of this universe is beyond the capacity of man's intellect. Every leaf of the same tree is different; every fruit of the same tree is different; every man is different; every bird is different; no insect of the same group is the same; and no animal of the same breed is the same. Nobody but God knows who is doing what. Everything is playing its assigned role in the universe, such as countless earthworms are busy in making the earth fertile. The more man knows, the more unknown appears before him. Five centuries after Guru Nanak, modern science reached its conclusion on the basis of its specialised readings and calculations that what man knows of the universe is only the tip of the iceberg. Great scientists of today themselves realise the limitations of science. Without religion, science is incomplete and one-sided. Without *piri*, *mir's* all activities will lead mankind to destruction. Only *mir* enlightened with *piri* can bring peace and prosperity to the modern world.

3.4 All the problems of modern society originate from the unbalanced man. Modern man with all its multifarious activities, economic struggle, social and political exploitation is the outcome of *miri* without *piri*, which resulted into the present day unstable equilibrium in life; can be cured by the *miri-piri* concept that has stood the test of time. The followers of *miri-piri* — saint-soldiers — the Khalsa have lived the *miri-piri* concept in the 18th century and demonstrated a very high moral character, self-discipline, patriotism and bravery at its

best; and maintained that exemplary character in times of war and peace alike. Qazi Nur Mohammed, the staunch anti-Sikh historian, was forced by his conscience to pay glowing tribute to the Sikh character.

3.5 Moreover, the Sikh High Way is open to every man and woman irrespective of caste, colour, creed or country. It is a straight, easy to follow and practical way of life. No more *smadhis*, no more yogic dispositions; no more renunciations; no need to leave the house and the family; no more body torturing; no more physical austerities; no more fasting; no more wine for goddesses in human skulls; no more animal sacrifices for the goddesses; no more idolatry; no more scaring of hells; no false promises of heavens; no more middle men (priesthood); straight communion with God through self realisation by leading a normal householder's life, following the simple course of *simran* and *sewa*.

3.6 In the modern age of discord and conflict, a balanced development of man's personality is most essential; it should be physical as well as spiritual. Today, the soul is completely being ignored. The result is the unbalanced person, whereas the balanced person is the solution of all our problems. The balanced state is the one most needed in the scientific world of today. Everyone seeks pleasures; nobody wants pains and sufferings; physical and sensual pleasures are momentary, transitory and subject to the law of diminishing satisfaction, which end in pains; when one object stops giving pleasures after some time, man switches over to another one, and so on. A rich man with all his physical needs satisfied, still feels hunger; it is the spiritual hunger that remains unsatisfied, but man runs after the physical pleasures of the world. In order to satisfy the craving for the divine, one must attune one's mind to the soul.

3.7 The mind is the source of all human desires. It carries human feelings, impulses, instincts, thoughts, likings and dislikings; it is the pivot of human activity. Of all the constituents, the mind is the most important; it moves at tremendous speed, flies, roams and runs after the sensual pleasures. It is noble when God-orientated, and is evil when self-orientated; our minds are blackened with sins of our present and past deeds. Just as the light of a lamp cannot be seen through a smoky and blackened chimney, God's divine light cannot be seen through the veil of our sins and ego.

Simran and *sewa* provide the cleansing system for the mind; regulate our thoughts, and tune up the thought generating system. The first most simple way of *simran* is reciting or listening of divine *Gurbani*

in simple Punjabi in the *sadh sangat*. The other way is *kirtan* — it plays a vital role in the age of materialism. It acts as a healthy tranquilliser that declutches the mind from the stresses and strains of day-to-day life, and brings tranquility, peace and bliss to the mind. The third method is *katha* — explanation of divine *Gurbani* by theologians. Motivated by *kirtan* and divine knowledge, one puts into practise the religious doctrine, in the spiritual laboratory of *Guru ka langar*, by way of *sewa*.

In this most simple way, with the passage of time, one's mind gets enlightened. When the lamp of truth is lit, the darkness of ego goes away, and one readily surrenders to the Will of God. Enlightened man showers love on all living beings; promotes fraternal feelings among fellow human beings; supports justice in social conduct and promotes the value of service and sacrifice. Thus, one becomes self-realised, self-illuminated through participation in active social life with ethical consciousness, social responsibility and political activity. It is a unique way of self-realisation; new mode of human salvation and *jiwan mukta* of "here and now" in this very life and not after death in some unknown places. He lives a cosmic life like a rose that emits fragrance, sweetness and happiness all around without expecting any reward, and remains ready for service and sacrifice for the upkeep of righteousness — the Will of God. This is the balanced state of the Sikh way of practical life for the modern age, space age and beyond. As long as this universe is there; Sikh thought will have continuous relevance for mankind.

3.8 Many world scholars, thinkers, philosophers and men of great letters, who have dispassionately studied the Sikh way of life, have reached the conclusion that Sikhism is the only universal religion which can show a blissful path of righteousness to mankind. One such instance of H.L. Bradshaw appears relevant.

A CHALLENGE (The task before us)

"Sikhism is a universal world faith with message for all men. This is amply illustrated in the writings of the Gurus. Sikhs must cease to think of their faith as 'just another good religion' and must begin to think in terms of Sikhism being the religion of this new age — books must be written proving this."

"The Sikh religion is truly the answer to problems of modern man".

"We must modernise and centralise our facilities, schools of Sikh scholars must translate the Guru Granth Sahib meaning fully, in its entirety, into all the world's major languages, as commanded by Guru Arjun... Our colleges and educational institutions must be-

come missionary minded, revise their curriculum and give great impetus to the training of Sikh missionaries."

"Sikh parents must teach their children honour of being missionaries and the responsibility which is ours and they must encourage these young people to become missionaries. Books of instruction must be written, translated and distributed throughout the world — which should be sent to all the larger city libraries and university libraries in India, England and America. Courses of instruction and training programmes utilizing the latest techniques of other religions and large scale organisations must be formulated, standardised and pursued."

"You will ask if this is not too ambitious and a difficult programme to pursue. In answer, let us ask ourselves, 'if this is not what the Gurus have enjoined us to do — if this is any greater sacrifice than those made by Sikh martyrs and our fathers'".

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 The *miri-piri* concept is the ideal way of a balanced blissful life, a life based on the law of nature. It is the ideal state of egalitarianism and divinity. All our domestic, social, economic and political problems are the product of unbalanced men and women. In spite of wealth and body comforts, there is no happiness, no satisfaction and no peace of mind. Our entire research is for the body and none for the mind, which controls the body. *Miri-piri* is the answer to all our present ills. It can wipe out domestic violence, divorces and crimes which drain out most of the national income of every country. Besides, *miri-piri* helps us to lead a blissful life. While this is the major part of my paper, it is also necessary to mention the present difficulties that Sikhism is facing.

4.2 Sikh religion is passing through a very critical phase, and the present does not look very assuring. Sikh identity is under attack externally and internally. The most effective way of destroying the identity of a nation is to dilute its religious, social, historic and linguistic basis. Hinduism is quite good at strangulating its victim by a skilful fraternal embrace. Vedanticization of Sikh thought, Brahminization of Sikh society are the way for Brahminical inroads into Sikhism.

4.3 As a result thereof, our Sikh scholars and interpreters, obsessed with the idea of unity of all faiths, are systematically diluting the universality of Sikhism. It has become a norm with Sikh scholars to interpret everything through Vedantic methodology. Most Sikh scholars are victims of the Vedantic syndrome. Unabated use of out-

dated Vedantic terminology and idioms by top scholars, writers and thinkers is the clear proof of erosion of Sikh identity.

4.4 Hinduism has already eclipsed the revolutionary elan of Sikhism. The edge of a new "*Halemi Raj*" has already been blunted. The *kirpan* is today just a ritual symbol. It is no longer considered as the protector of righteousness. Two unethical thoughts are being promoted in the national press; first, that Sikhism is nothing but Hindu Vedic Arya Dharma. Second, that separateness from Hinduism is separateness from India. The unholy alliance of the press, TV, and radio media has launched a major onslaught of Sikhism. The biased impression created by the national media is most detrimental to the development of the Sikh community. In the name of integration, there is real danger that Sikh identity might get submerged into Hinduism like Buddhists and Jains.

4.5 Sikh ideals, Sikh character and the Sikh way of life are already rapidly vanishing out of the minds of common Sikhs. The true Sikh spirit is buried under thick layers of false ritualism. Ritualism is infested in every walk of life. The Sikh code of conduct has already become a thing of the past. Even our ways of religious celebrations have been corrupted. The Khalsa uniform is there but no saintly qualities or Khalsa virtues. One must have the attributes of the Khalsa, otherwise, to deceive others by putting on the Khalsa uniform, is fraudulent, a deceitful act, a serious offence and a great insult to the uniform.

4.6 The Sikh religion has suffered more from its own missionaries than from anybody else. They are untrained, ignorant of Sikh doctrine and wandering aimlessly in the dark lanes of Ramayana - Mahabharata, miles away from *Gurnat* light. Besides, there is very little authentic literature, and this is a great handicap. Sikh identity is under attack by hostile forces from all sides.

4.7 Let the ill-intentioned intellectuals know, for all times to come, that Sikhism is not a part of the commonwealth of Hinduism. Sikhism has got nothing common at all with Hinduism. Let the Brahmin bear in mind forever that there is no place for Brahminical rituals and the anti-social laws of Manu in Sikhism. Let the ill-advised and selfish Sikh scholars know that diluting the universality of Sikhism is unethical, against the Guru's teaching, anti-social and anti-mankind. Diluting truth with senseless rituals is a sin, is a crime against humanity — it must be stopped.

4.8 We need to act promptly and firmly, before it is too late to mend. The gurdwara management system needs immediate overhaul-

ing, based on Sikh code of conduct. Sikh scholars will have to change their Brahminical lenses. We have to give equal status to women in every walk of life; every institution, every office, and every religious body must include women workers and executives. It is our Guru's teaching, it is the law of nature and the Will of God. We have to revive our glorious past, our unique high moral character, and our heroic deeds. Mere past references will not take us far. Sikhism has, throughout its glorious history, confronted challenges; faced onslaughts, both external and internal. There is nothing in the world which cannot be done, provided one has the determination. We must remember this fact — the loftier the ideal, the greater the struggle.

4.9 Let us learn a lesson from our historical deeds. It was the courage of determined minds that refused to accept the idea of defeat. It was the spirit of righteousness that defied injustice, tyranny and persecution. It was the courage of mind, the strength of moral character and the spirit of freedom that made Sikhs victorious against all odds. To persist, to persevere, to grapple with destiny, to hold fast and to hold hard and to be faithful to our noble ideals, is the need of the hour. Today is the time to remember the historic noble deeds, ideal and divine teachings of our great Gurus. Now is the need of the hour to stand up against forces of unrighteousness and to uphold the lofty ideals and glorious traditions of our religion. It is high time, the Khalsa should wake up, think and rise up to its glorious traditions. Let us pledge to dedicate ourselves to the noble Khalsa mission; let us pledge ourselves to carry forward the Khalsa ideals and let us remember our great Guru's warning:

"So long as you adhere to the Khalsa code of conduct, retain your distinct identity, you will find me amongst you, but as soon as you blend your faith with Brahminical rituals, I shall be no more amongst you."

Guru Gobind Singh

Finally, let us pray, as enjoyed by our great Gurus, for the good will, prosperity and welfare of the whole of mankind and all the living beings. The chair, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to conclude my paper and let us pray for the whole suffering world as per divine commandment:

"Save this burning world through Thy Grace, Oh Lord!
Save us through whichever door of salvation Thou decidest."

Guru Granth Sahib

~ ~ ~

Section IV
GENERAL

WORLD-VIEW IN SIKHISM

Dr H.S. Virk

What is the meaning of world-view? It is a set of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, values, etc., which determine or constitute a comprehensive outlook on life and the universe.¹ In every religion or spiritual system, the concept of God or Ultimate Reality determines its world-view and its structure.² Our thesis on the world-view in Sikhism will be formulated on three basic concepts:

- I. Concept of God/Ultimate Reality
- II. Concept of Universe/World
- III. Concept of Ideal Man/Society

I. CONCEPT OF GOD/ULTIMATE REALITY IN SIKHISM

The Sikh scripture, *Adi Guru Granth Sahib*, defines the concept of God through His attributes: Eternal Unity, the Om that has assumed the Creation-Body; Being of Truth; Creator Person; Without Fear or Hatred; Beyond Time and Space; Spirit-born/unborn; Self-Existent; Transcendental Cosmic-Spirit made manifest by grace of the Guru.³ The concept of God as Creator Person of the world has far reaching implications in the religious history of India. A positive relation between God and the world is a revolutionary postulate in Sikhism, which forms the basis of Sikh Cosmology. God is both Transcendent and Immanent. He is both in the universe and outside it. Sikhism dialectically unites the ideas of God and world. Transcendence shows that God is prior to and distinct from the world. Immanence of God is a symbolic way of expressing God's connection with the world. God himself transforms into creation, that is, changing His *nirguna* form into *sarguna* form.⁴ The formless God manifests Himself in the creation, and there is no dichotomy in *nirguna* and *sarguna* forms.⁵

NATURE OF ULTIMATE REALITY

Metaphysics is a systematic and sustained enquiry into the nature of ultimate reality. It is an attempt to know the reality against

mere appearance. Religion relies both on reason and revelation in its attempt to study the nature of reality. To the Indian philosopher, experience is the ultimate test of truth. Since the reality is trans-empirical, it cannot be known through sense experience but through intuitive experience (*anubhuti*); it is the experience of the highest level, for it transcends both the rational and the sensory aspects of human experience with which we are normally acquainted.⁶

Mystics believe in the integral or holistic experience of reality. We need not rest content with the partial truths revealed by astronomy, by physics, by biology, by history; each true in its own field, non-complete in itself, non-giving the whole picture; nor yet with the truth of mathematics or the truth of language, primarily truths of expression, obeying rules which men themselves have made. Beyond all these, beyond the contradictions of each separate truth, lies concealed the Supreme and Final Truth.⁷

The following hymn of Guru Angad Dev alludes to the transcendental nature of reality.⁸ "In this realm, one sees but without the eyes; one listens but without the ears; one walks but without the feet; one works but without the hands; one speaks but without the tongue; thus attaining life in death. O Nanak, one meets God after realisation of the divine law."

According to Upanishads, *Brahman* or *Atman* which is the ultimate reality, is of the nature of existence (*Sat*), consciousness (*Cit*), and bliss (*Ananda*). It is one only and non-dual. The pluralistic universe is only an illusory appearance of *Brahman* or *Atman* due to *maya* or *avidya*. There are two views of reality in the Upanishads, the cosmic view and the acosmic view. These two views serve as the basis for theistic and absolutistic schools of thought in Vedānta.

Sikhism fundamentally differs from this standpoint of Vedānta. The world is neither *maya* nor a perversion. It is a *dharamsala*, a place for righteous actions. Guru Nanak discards the Vedantic conception of reality in *Asa-di-Var*, and definitely proclaims that this universe is real, not an illusion.⁹ He says, "Real are Thy continents; Real is the universe; Real are these forms and material objects; Thy doings are real, O Lord". Further, the Guru calls the universe as His mansion.¹⁰ "This moving universe is the divine mansion of the True Lord; and the True One lives therein."

II. CONCEPT OF UNIVERSE/WORLD

According to Deussen, there are four different views of creation of universe in the Hindu philosophy:

- (i) Matter is eternal and *Purusha* (Creator) has always been independent of God. God does not create the matter, but moulds it into creation as a potter maketh the earthen pots.
- (ii) *Purusha* is the cause and creator of matter. But after the creation, God does not interfere in its working and it continues according to its own fundamental laws.
- (iii) God himself transforms into creation, i.e., changing from *Nirguna* to *Sarguna* form.
- (iv) Creation is a play of *maya*. It is a mere illusion. Only God is real.

The age of the universe according to the Hindu world-view is infinite. There are innumerable *Brahmas* who are employed in the process of creation. Each *Brahma* has a life time of 100 years. On astronomical time scale, the year is much longer than our solar year. Some of the time units of Hindu calendar are given below:

1 <i>Maha Yuga</i>	= S + D + T + K (Four <i>Yugas</i>)
	= 432×10^4 solar years.
1000 <i>Maha Yugas</i>	= <i>Kalp</i> = Day = Night (of <i>Brahma</i>)
Age of <i>Brahma</i>	= $73 \times 432 \times 10^{10}$ Solar years.

Sikh cosmology challenges the Hindu world-view as archaic, and based on dogma. In *Japuji*, Guru Nanak sums up his view-point about creation of the universe, which he elaborates in a most scientific manner in *Raga Maru Solhe*. His creation hypothesis is summed up as follows:

'God created the universe by uttering a word'.¹¹

Guru Nanak poses the question:

'What was the time and the moment,
the day and the month,
when the world was created'?¹²

In the next stanza, he talks of the prevailing view-points:

'Neither the Pundit can find this date
by looking through the Purana texts,
Nor can the Qazi tell from the Koran,
Neither the Yogi nor any one else knows
the day, week, season and month of creation.
The Creator who creates the world,
He alone knows the time'.¹³

In *Maru Solhe*, Guru Nanak versifies his thoughts about the 'epoch' before creation which is referred to as '*sunya*', a concept at variance with the *sunyata* philosophy of Buddhism. The Guru envisages creation out of this '*sunya*' phase:¹⁴

'The creator was all alone. He created water, earth and the sky; even the sun and the moon from this *sunya*'.

According to Guru Amar Das,¹⁵ the '*sunya*' phase lasted for as long as 36 *yugas* (38.88×10^6 solar years) before the creation phase started.

According to the 'Big Bang' model of the universe, the creation started some 20 billion years ago from the 'big bang' epoch in the history of the universe when infinitely dense matter 'Primeval Atom' exploded creating an immense flux of radiation (energy quantas). Within a microsecond, elementary particles were created which are building blocks of matter. From this primeval nebular medium known as 'gas-cloud', galaxies and solar systems emerged. This creation process is going on till date. Stars are born in galaxies, million times brighter and heavier than our sun, grow from 'red giants' to 'white dwarfs' and explode either as 'supernovas' or turning into invisible 'black holes'. It is predicted that 'black holes' are such demons that can annihilate the solar systems and other celestial bodies. Such is the fate of this universe, yet to be fully explored by cosmologists.

This wonderful drama of creation is elucidated further by Guru Nanak in his mystic reverie in *Maru Solhe*, which has assumed the role of touchstone for Sikh cosmology vis-a-vis its scientific counterpart. Surprisingly, there is a perfect correspondence between the epoch of 'big-bang' and the creation out of *sunya* phase as enunciated in Guru Granth Sahib.¹⁶

"From the True Lord, proceeded the air, and from air became the water. From the water, God created the entire world, and in every heart He infused His light."

The Guru further elucidates:^{16a}

"For billions of years, there was nothing but utter darkness. There was neither day nor night, nor moon, nor sun, but the Lord alone sat in profound trance. Neither there was creation, nor air, nor water. There were no continents, nor underworlds, nor seven oceans nor rivers, nor the flowing water. There was neither death, nor time. There was no Brahma, nor Vishnu or Shiva.

When He so willed, He created the world and supported the firmament without support. He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and extended the love of mammon. He founded the continents, solar systems and underworlds, and from the Absolute self, He became manifest."

Guru Arjun Dev describes in Sukhmani¹⁷ the myriad forms of creation:

"There are millions and millions of galaxies and solar systems in the universe. The phenomenon of creation has occurred so many times. But the one Lord remains for ever and ever."

The riddle of creation of the universe will remain an enigma for cosmologists and there is no final word yet in cosmology. About the present theories and models, we may conclude with a quotation from Benati Chaupai in the Dasam Granth:¹⁸

"Everyone explains the creation process according to his intellect, but no one can tell, O Lord, how you first created the universe."

III. CONCEPT OF IDEAL MAN/SOCIETY

The most important concept in the Sikh world-view is the creation of an ideal man in the universe, the '*gurmukh*' of Guru Nanak or the '*khalsa*' of Guru Gobind Singh. In the opening stanza of *Japuji*, Guru Nanak poses the question:¹⁹

'How can we become *sachiaara*?

How can we break the bonds of falsehood?'

And then he answers himself in the same stanza:¹⁹

'By obeying His Will, as ordained by Him'.

Guru Nanak makes a radical departure from the earlier Indian religious systems in expounding his concept of *gurmukh*, the harbinger of *dharamsal* on this earth. The *gurmukh* promotes the *Naam* culture of Guru Granth Sahib. In *Siddh Gosht*, Guru Nanak propounds and promulgates his concept of the ideal man, the *gurmukh*. When the *Siddhas* asked the Guru to spell out the reasons of his wanderings (*Udasis*). The Guru gave an emphatic reply,²⁰ 'I am looking for a *gurmukh* in the world'. The Guru knows that God created the earth, so that man can attain the emancipated state of a *gurmukh*.²¹

It is in the background of his spiritual experience and his concept of God, that Guru Nanak lays down the ground rules and methodology of his system.²² The first corollary of it is that withdrawal, monasticism and asceticism are rejected, and instead, a householder's life is accepted. He condemns the *yogis* for "being idlers, and not being ashamed of begging alms at the very door of the householder whose life style they spurn". He declares that liberation is possible even while playing and laughing, and that the God-centred (*gurmukh*) lives truthfully, even while being a householder. In *Siddh Gosht*, Guru Nanak gives a beautiful analogy²³ to explain his concept of a householder's life: "The life of a worldly man should be like that of a lotus in the lake, and that of a duck in the river, living in them and still unstained by their waters".

For greater details of the world-view in Sikhism as practised and propounded by the Guru, the intelligent reader is referred to the monograph 'Sikhism: A Miri-Piri System' written by Kharak Singh and published by SGPC, Amritsar. To sum up, in the words of Puran Singh, "If the Sikh, as he was born, had even been afforded opportunities of spiritual isolation from the rest of the world, to develop his powers of self-realisation, and his instincts of art and agriculture and colonisation, his would have been by now, one of the best societies of divinely inspired labourers, of saints living by the sweat of their brow".²⁴

"But Brahminism was there to engulf it from within. His political temper, the result of his complete mental liberation and his passionate love of liberty pitched him against the Mughals from the time of its birth. Out of the jaws of death, if the Khalsa has still come out, there is much hope for it yet. All is not yet lost".²⁵

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4. Adi Guru Granth, p. 290.

ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ ।
ਆਪਨ ਕੀਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਡਿਰਿ ਜਾਪਿ । (ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ: 5)
5. Ibid, p. 250.

ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਕਾਰ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਏਕ ।
ਏਕਹਿ ਏਕ ਬਖਾਨਨੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ । (ਗਉੜੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖੰਗੀ ਮ: 5)
6. 'Essays on Hinduism', Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968.
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ਅਖੀ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਵਿਣੁ ਕੰਨਾ ਸੁਨਣਾ ।
ਪੈਰਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਚਲਣਾ ਵਿਣੁ ਹਥਾ ਕਰਣਾ ।
ਜੀਭੈ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਇਉ ਜੀਵਤ ਮਰਣਾ ।
ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਕੈ ਤਉ ਖਸਮੇ ਮਿਲਣਾ । (ਮਹਲਾ 2)
9. Ibid, p. 463.

ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਸਚੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ।
ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੇਅ ਸਚੇ ਆਕਾਰ ।
ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਰਣੇ ਸਰਬ ਬੀਚਾਰ । (ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ, ਮ: 1)
10. Ibid, p. 463.

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ,
ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ । (ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ, ਮ: 2)
11. Ibid, p. 3.

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ ।
ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ।

(ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪਉੜੀ 16)

12. Ibid, p. 4.

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਥਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ।
ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ।

(ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪਉੜੀ 21)

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ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਰੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੇ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ।
ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਭੁਰਾਣੁ ।
ਥਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ।
ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ।

(ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪਉੜੀ 21)

14. Ibid, p. 1037.

ਪਉਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਸੁੰਨੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਜੇ ।
ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਕਾਇਆ ਗੜ ਰਾਜੇ ।
ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜ ਗੋਣਾਰੇ ।
ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਧਰਤਿ ਅਕਾਸੁ ਉਪਾਏ ।

(ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮ: 1)

15. Ibid, p. 949.

ਫਤੀਹ ਜੁਗ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵਰਤਿਓ ਸੁੰਨਾਹਰਿ ।
ਫਤੀਹ ਜੁਗ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ਸਾ ਆਪੇ ਗਲਣ ਕੀਨੀ ।

(ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਮ: 3)

16. Ibid, p. 19.

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੇ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ।।
ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੇਏ ।।

(ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮ: 1)

16a. Ibid, p. 1035.

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ।
ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ।
ਨ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੋਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ,
ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ।

... ..

ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਅਰੰਭੇ,
ਗੁਪਤਹੁ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਦਾ ।

(ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮ: 1)

17. Ibid, p. 276.

ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਖਾਣੀ ਅਰੁ ਖੇਡ।
ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਆਕਾਸ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ।
ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ।
ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ।

(ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ: 5)

18. Benati Chaupai, Dasam Granth.

ਆਪੁ ਆਪਨੀ ਬੁਧਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਤੀ।
ਬਰਨਤ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਭੁਹਿ ਤੇਤੀ।
ਤੁਮਰਾ ਲਖਾ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਪਸਾਰਾ।
ਕਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ।

19. Adi Guru Granth, p. 1.

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ।
ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ।

(ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪਉੜੀ 1)

20. Ibid, p. 939.

ਕਿਸੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਗਿ੍ਹਰੁ ਤਜਿਓ ਉਦਾਸੀ?

.....

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਖੋਜਤ ਭਏ ਉਦਾਸੀ।

(ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ, ਪਉੜੀ 17-18)

21. Ibid, p. 941.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਚੇ ਸਾਜੀ।

ਤਿਸ ਮਹਿ ਓਪਤਿ ਖਪਤਿ ਸੁ ਬਾਜੀ।

(ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ, ਪਉੜੀ 30)

22. Kharak Singh, "Sikhism: A Miri-Piri System", Dharam Parchar Committee (SGPC), Amritsar (1994).

23. Adi Guru Granth, p. 938.

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਲਮੁ ਨਿਗੰਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੇ ਸਾਣੇ।

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ। (ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ, ਪਉੜੀ 5)

24. Puran Singh, 'Spirit of the Sikh' Part II, Vol. 2, p. 321, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981.

25. Ibid, p. 322.

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WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

Alice Basarke

Telling her story in Sikhism is a daunting task. What should be simple is complicated by not just a patriarchal system, but lack of primary historical sources. The beautiful teachings of Sikhism are obscured by fairy-tales that pass as popular folklore. Finding the key to cut through the nonsense is most difficult.

This paper raises questions, rather than giving answers. The answers can only be found through serious, scientific research. Historians in a hurry must accept that no one will hand knowledge to us. It must be earned through hard work. Discussion and conjecture, though fascinating in itself, is not good enough.

However, as I see myself as a writer, not a trained historian, I have chosen to raise discussion, hoping that through discussion more people will become interested in the topic. More research needs to be done. In spite of the difficulties encountered, I believe that the best way to improve Public Relations for the Sikhs is to write about their history in clear, concise and modern language. Women's Issues and Women's History are of universal appeal. Why not seize an opportunity and give the world exactly what it is seeking HER STORY. The story of women in the Sikh nation.

A wise person once wrote: "History is written by the victors and is filtered through the prism of their prejudices". Therefore, you should not trust any one person who writes history. The author may write the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — but it is his truth — as he sees it. Truth in short, is relative. It is in the eye of the beholder. Historians are humans and they tend to favour their own kind.

On the other hand, history without a doubt is the collective conscience of a nation. It is the soul of a people, and no living nation can survive for long without a written history, for it is in the pages of history that heroic deeds and sacrifices are preserved. It is from the pages of history that the younger generation learns of the glorious past

of its elders. It is in history that we find inspiration and learn of our cultural heritage. Those who do not learn from the lessons of history, are condemned to repeat them.

Sikhism has a glorious history. As a religion, it is unique in that its scripture is available to us today in its first and original form, yet sadly, the same cannot be said for the history of the Sikhs. Bhai Vir Singh understood the problem. He once wrote:

"No other society in the world has put such hard work and sustained effort for building up its stature in such a short period as the Khalsa, but no other community has been so careless in recording its achievements". "Moreover, the weaknesses, which now, are quietly and invisibly creeping into the organization, are enervating it because of the inherent lack of accuracy of details and sequence in its history. If this deficiency is ever made up, the community, undoubtedly, will be endowed with a new spirit".

The problem is acute. There has to be an explanation as to why a simple question like **WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?** apparently cannot be easily answered. Historians have either not understood the importance of the reforms taught by the Gurus, or they have deliberately ignored them. Why?

The time has come to probe that question. Guru Nanak created a new religion. The religion he taught was a radical departure from the existing beliefs of the time. For more than 500 years, Sikhs have repeated his Credo that Sikhs are not Hindus. How simple that is to prove by simply pointing out the (casteless) equality of men, and the importance of women in their lives. Is it logical to deduce that the people who undertook to write Sikh history and religion did not understand its basic tenets? If indeed, they did understand, why did they deliberately ignore them? Why is it necessary, after all this time to ask **"WHERE ARE THE WOMEN"**? Have the enemies of Sikhism been so well organised that they were able to write half truths and distortions in an effort to confuse the illiterate and uneducated? It would appear that McLeod and Oberoi are not the first writers bent on the destruction of the Sikh faith. This has been going on for a long time.

One of the cornerstones of the Sikh religion is equality.

Equality of all mankind.

"God has created everyone equal, and no one is higher or lower than the other".

Sri Guru Granth Sahib

A remarkable statement made by Guru Nanak over 500 years ago was recorded in *Asa di var*:

"In a woman, man is conceived,
From a woman, he is born,
With a woman, he is betrothed and married,
With woman, he contracts friendship,
Why denounce her, the one from whom even Kings are born?
From a woman, a woman is born,
None may exist without a woman"

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 473.

From this quotation it is clear that the Sikh Gurus advocated equal status for women in all aspects of life.

Another cornerstone of Sikh teaching, is the universally accepted truth, that man does not attain salvation by fasting, remaining celibate and withdrawing from life. Guru Nanak challenged the popular notion, prevalent at that time, that women were inherently evil. By denouncing celibacy and renunciation of the world and by advocating family life, indeed by his own example, the first Guru put woman on a par with man. He was very clear in his teaching that woman was not a hindrance to man, but a partner in serving God and seeking salvation. Guru Nanak says:

"Living within family life,
One obtainth salvation"

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 661

Moreover, the Sikh Gurus advocated marriage of two equal partners as can be seen in the teaching of Guru Amar Das:

"Only they are truly wedded, who have one spirit in two bodies".

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 778

And again conjugal fidelity was promoted in the statement:

"He is truly celibate, who is married to one wife".

Bhai Gurdas

Teja Singh in his "Essays in Sikhism", published in 1944, writes that the effect of all this teaching was that men who formerly left their females to the mercy of invaders, now came forward to defend their honour and their homes. Women, too, came to realize their position, and were known to take bold stands when warranted. When someone expressed surprise to Guru Hargobind, on his living a married life, the Guru answered:

"Woman is the conscience of man".

Is it not logical to assume that the ten Gurus who expounded this religion, would take great pains to demonstrate by example in their everyday lives that this is so?

Mansa Devi, the wife of Guru Amar Das, supervised the excavation of the pool in Amritsar. Both men and women participated in this labour of love. Bibi Bhani, daughter of the Guru also helped with the actual excavation, or the first *Kar Seva*. Sikh women, starting with the Gurus wives, and down through the ages, have made definite and significant contributions in the shaping and preserving of the Sikh religion. Sikh women have, without a doubt, been strong contributors to the creation of a new society, a new way of life, a new philosophy and a new culture. Yet, no matter what they did, or how much they sacrificed, they were still not able to attract the attention of the historians. It is very disturbing to note that historians writing on the life of the Gurus, the suffering of the people, the heroic battles, the tragedies and the glorious victories, have chosen to ignore totally the contribution of women. No one has bothered to tell her story. As a result, we have only half the story. There are vague references and allusions, but no authentic historical material seems to be available. Basing oneself on knowledge of religious teaching, one can make assumptions, and perhaps attempt a somewhat educated guess, as to how things must have been.

What are the distortions and lies that have been repeated so many times, that people now seem to be willing to accept them without question? There are so many, that I will have to limit myself to those dealing directly with women.

Did any of the Gurus have more than one wife? There is much written on the lives of the ten Gurus. Strange to observe, but people seem ready to accept that at least two of them, Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had three wives each. Even more curious are the stories told about Guru Har Rai, Gyani Gyan Singh in his "Tawarikh Guru Khalsa" on page 250-251 mentions four marriages of the Guru, saying that: "He was married to Kishan Kaur and her three sisters". Macauliffe talks of Guru Har Rai marrying two sisters in one ceremony. I have taken the trouble to read all the so called "good" and "highly respected writers." What am I to believe of any of the above stories? — The conclusion I have come to, is none of the above. If women are equal, how can anyone speak such nonsense.

I believe it logical that each Guru had to be married to only one woman. If historians talk of polygamy, it may be ignorance, mischievous or in many cases simply a lack of interest. No one bothered to do their research in this department. It is a cultural fact, that women were often given a new name by their in-laws after marriage. A contributing factor might have been the common use of nick-names. If a different nick-name was used before and after marriage, one then is faced with four names for one woman. A point in question, would be Mata Jito who was called Sundri (meaning the beautiful one) by her in-laws.

Is polygamy part of Sikhism? Not in the teaching! What utter nonsense! How can polygamy be compatible with equality? And why is it over the centuries, only men are having more than one wife? Where's the equality? Furthermore, it is stated that if a woman does not produce a son, the man is justified in marrying a second wife. How is it, if women are equal, that having a son should be considered more important than having a daughter?

When did Sikh women stop wearing the turban? We have evidence that in the early 18th century, the mother of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who was a preacher, did wear a turban. Also J.D. Cunningham relates in the mid 19th century that Sikh women were easily distinguished from their contemporaries, by the high top knot of hair, that they wore, covered with a turban. Yet today, the turban is not considered fashionable by Sikh women. What happened? There is a religious requirement for Sikhs to wear turbans. When did women give up the turban? And why?

When did women lose their equal status in Sikhism? It would appear that in the earlier days, women had better status, and were permitted to take part in decision making. Women had a role. Guru Amar Das is credited for organising Sikhism. He created 22 *Manjis* for the preaching of Sikhism. Four of these were headed by women. He also trained 146 persons to go out as priests and missionaries. Of these, 94 were men and 52 were women. Mata Sundri looked after and guided the Sikh Panth for 40 years after her husband's death. Yet today, we see no women presidents in our gurdwaras. Women are kept down and out of the way. They have little to say about their religion, their nation, or even their daily lives. What happened? When? And why?

Is equality understood by Sikhs? The Gurus taught equality. At a time when breaking the rules of the caste system was an offense punishable by death, the Sikhs understood the teaching and risked their very lives to practise their new faith. Something happened along the way. What happened, when and why, needs to be researched. The fact remains that today, most Sikhs know which caste they came from. There is also a great preoccupation with Jat and non-Jat status as well as the inferior status of women. How can women expect equality, when the Sikh community seems unable to distinguish between religious tenets and the culture imposed by the majority community which engulfs them?

What is the role and status of Sikh women today? After 500 years head start, Sikh women are no better off than their counterparts in any other religion or nation. There are too many unanswered questions, too many issues. There is no time to waste. We cannot wait for answers to come from anyone else. The time has come when women would be well advised to follow the teachings of their religion, and to heed the words of Guru Gobind Singh:

"With your own hands carve out your destiny".

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PLACE AND ROLE OF WOMAN IN SIKH SOCIETY

Dr Gurnam Kaur

The development of a civilization, or the cultural advancement of a society is indicated by the place of woman in that society. The reason is that she plays a great role in maintaining the cultural values of any society. As Prof. Puran Singh observes, "She wore the cross of the whole family as did Jesus, but started no Christianity. Every woman is the Messiah. Her daily life in the service of man, gave us the songs of her beautiful soul, as the shifting colours of the sky and the changing lines of Nature tell us of Nature's inner person. Woman was thus the inspiration for all the heroic efforts of man to make himself man. Woman is responsible for all his best longings for immortality, for all his religions, for all his arts and for all his noble wingings above earth and sky."¹

There are so many factors which determine her place and contribute towards her role in the society. When we view a woman's place and status in society, we have to keep in view the sociological, political and economic development of that society, the most important among them being the religious thought and the value-pattern, which largely determine the role a woman can play. At the same time, it also depends upon her own consciousness, of her spiritual and moral strength. As Prof. Puran Singh further remarks, "And when I contemplate the modern type of woman that has denuded her head of her hair and her limbs of the mystery of clothes, and when she has not, by throwing all these cumbersome veils aside, revealed her soul to us, I fall dead with despair — whither is she going? The world has become emptied of human beauty. I wanted to cling to her soul, the immortal portion of her, and she wishes me to cling to her flesh and bone which is precious only because of her great soul. Otherwise all is mutton, mere mutton."²

Before coming to the path laid down by the Gurus, I would like to refer briefly to the place of woman in other religious systems, since religious thought has a dominant influence on the life pattern of

its adherents. Woman occupies a very low position in the Hindu thought. In the Vedic and Upanishadic thought, woman occupies an important place, and there are even mentioned some woman-thinkers and seers like Gargi and Maitrey. It is said, "The home is a sacred institution according to Upanishad thinkers and the presence of the wife is essential in any religious ceremony. It is only after going through the pleasures of married life that the individual is called upon to gradually wean himself from it and enter the field of renunciation and contemplation..... Caste division is based more on duties and character than on birth."³ The life span is divided into four stages or *ashramas* in Upanishads, i.e., *brahmacharya* (student life), *grihastha* (the life of a householder), *vanprastha* (the retired life), and *sanyasa* (the wandering mendicant's life). The human race is divided into four castes or *varans*, i.e., *Brahmins* who learn and teach scriptures and perform other religious duties, *Kshatriyas* who learn the art of fighting and provide protection from inner and outer dangers, *Vaishyas* who earn the livelihood for the whole society through agriculture and trade, and the *Shudras* or the low caste who provide menial services to serve the members of the other three castes. So we see that although the householder's life is considered important, still the three fourth of it is devoted to the asceticism, and woman is given a back seat in the spiritual advancement. Man keeps himself away from her. Similarly, the members of the other castes than *Brahmins* are discriminated against in the pursuit of religious rights. Position worsened much with the advancement of time. Manu is considered as the law-giver and *Manusmriti*, as the Veda of Brahmanical revivalism. He classified the whole human race into *Varnas* on the basis of birth rather than on action or duties. He reserved all the human rights only for men of the upper castes or the twice born people. According to *Manusmriti* only men of upper castes are entitled to religious education. Women and *Shudras* both, are debarred from any kind of religious education or religious experience. In the social stratification, both are assigned the lowest level. Manu makes it more strict and complicated when he says that in childhood a woman must be subject to her father, after marriage to her husband and in old age, after the death of her husband, to her sons.⁴ She was even expected to follow her husband in death by burning herself alive. There are so many other commandments given by Manu, due to which woman and *Shudra* both can never be an independent

individual. They have no existence of their own. They will always be slaves, dependent upon others for the matters concerning their own fate. They have no free will. In the *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva* cults, woman is branded as she-wolf, and a hindrance in the path of spiritual realization, and is responsible for the deprivation of his youth. In the Indian society, woman has been kept under *Pardha* (veil); child marriage was common: and widow remarriage was not allowed. Woman was taken as a bondage on the way to salvation and ascetism became compulsory for salvation. The result was that Indian religions became quietist in nature instead of societal. It resulted in neglect of the society as a whole, and personal or individual salvation was taken as the goal of human life, for which man has to give up his family life and home and go through hard penances and meditation. Woman, who is the central figure in a societal religion, automatically became irrelevant.

In Christianity also, we do not find a very respectable place for woman. The Bible says that woman was created for the entertainment of man out of his rib and she is considered responsible for the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden.⁵ From the above discussion we can well imagine the status of woman in Christianity. The Christian belief is that woman destroys God's image in man. Virginity is considered a worthy offering to Christ. As Dr Radha Krishan observes, "Christian Europe has been brought up on the belief that death would have been unknown but for the unkindness of woman. She was accused of treachery, backbiting and tempting men to doom."⁶

There is a distinct advancement in Quran on the status of woman before Mohammad, because in Islam she is provided with the right of inheritance and she is also to be adequately maintained by her husband. Still she is considered inferior to her husband, who can divorce her at will. As mentioned in the Quran, "Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate). So go to your tilth as ye will, and send (good deeds) before you for your souls..... Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah hath created in their wombs if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire a reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise."⁷ Moreover, we know that women are kept

under veil, they have to wear a cover called *burkah*, when they go outside the home. All of us know about Taslima Nasreen, a doctor-intellectual of Bangladesh. She time and again repeats that she has written nothing against the Holy Quran. But Mullahs and fundamentalists are after her life because she has raised a voice in favour of woman and has done nothing to flout religion.

None of the conditions discussed above are applicable to Sikhism. Sikhism is a revealed religion. The vision of Reality, the Ultimate Truth was revealed to Guru Nanak in a mystic experience, in a direct communion with God, and this Truth was conveyed by the Guru to the Sikh through *shabad*. So, *bani* or *shabad* became the form, the medium through which the Truth was revealed. We find so many references to this effect in the *bani* itself that the Truth or the *shabad* is communicated to the Guru in communion with God. The Guru says that as he receives the word of God, so does he utter its contents. Guru Nanak utters the speech of Truth for, now is the time to utter the Truth.⁸ The Guru further says that what he conveys is revealed by the Lord.⁹ And Guru Ram Das says, "Let this be known to everyone that the Word of the Guru alone is True, for, the Lord Himself speaks (through the Guru's word)."¹⁰ So, according to Sikh philosophy, the basis of our faith is *bani*. Human being is to have faith in *bani*, the Revelation. The postulate, given in *bani* for the equality of man, is based on birth. It is said, "The Lord in you placed His light, then did you into the world arrive."¹¹ It is nowhere said whether man came into the world or woman came into the world. According to the *Gurmata* philosophy, human being comes to the world only if and when God keeps His light in him. This thesis is further supported by the concept that God alone is Man, i.e., *Purusha*, and all others are His bride or female i.e., *nari*.¹² The man and woman are treated as one human being. And the ideal placed before man is, "to realize that light, the *Joti* put in him by God."¹³ This is to be realized through the *Gurmata* way, which has been made clear by the Guru in Japuji. The basic question is, "How then to be true? How to remove the veil of falsehood?" The answer follows, "Through obedience to His Will, inborn in us."¹⁴ The way is to be known through the Guru, through the *bani*. In Sikh philosophy the concept of Guru is of the *shabad* Guru, because the *shabad*, the word is eternal, it is infallible. That is why the Guru is the *bani* (revelation) and the *bani* is the Guru. Faith in the *bani* is faith in the Guru. There

is no discrimination of being man or woman for this faith.

According to Sikhism, man is not high or low due to his caste, birth or sex. He is high or low due to the deeds he performs. There is no dichotomy in man based on sex, male or female. All human beings are equal from birth. There are only two classes of human beings (man or woman) viz., *manmukh* and *gurmukh*. Those who follow the path of the Guru, obey the Will of God, the Divine ordinance are called *gurmukhs*, and those who follow the path of their own mind, act according to their ego running away from the Guru, the *shabad* (the word), are *manmukhs* (egoists). *Gurbani* has given this Royal Road as a way of *gurmukh* and the *gurmukh* (may be a man or a woman) is the acceptable class of human beings and *manmukhs* the egoists, (may be a man or a woman) is the class of unacceptable ones. According to the Guru, the *manmukh* comes into the cycle of birth and death and the *gurmukh* is regarded as the one who lives under the grace of the Guru and he realizes or can realize himself to be the image of Divine Light with the Guru's grace. There is no discrimination between man and woman in the field of religion. He/she is either a *gurmukh* or a *manmukh*. That is why, the woman in Sikhism, not only has the equal right to religious experience, but also a respectful place, for the first time in Indian society, theoretically as well as practically.

When illumination of Revelation takes place in any religion, it selects some symbols for its manifestation. If we make a deep study of any revealed religion we can easily observe these symbols. The *Gurmata* Revelation is manifested in the form of *bani*. To manifest this Absolute Truth, the Guru has used the medium of language and he expressed it while taking many symbols from the different aspects of life. In the whole of *bani*, the two symbols i.e., of man and woman have been used very frequently. Woman is the symbol of the seeker, the inquisitive, the devotee, the Sikh which is expressed through the parables of sister, friend, wife, Lord-favoured woman, etc. The symbols of friend and sister are used mainly for companions or holy congregation. Similarly wife, the Lord-favoured woman (*sulakhni*) etc., are the symbols used for a *gurmukh*. And the symbols of the caste-off woman (*duhagan*), the ill-mannered woman (*kulakhni*), are used frequently for the egoists (*manmukhs*). In the same manner, the love and reverence for God or the Guru is expressed through the symbols of husband, father, friend, brother, etc. Here, not going into the detail of these

symbols, I want to share some conclusions from the *bani* of Guru Ram Das in *Rag Suhi Chhant* under the heading of "*Lavan*".

In the earlier composition the Guru inspires the seeker to have faith in the Revelation (*bani*). Here, the human being is called a woman who prays before God to unite her with the holy Preceptor through whom she may cast off her vices while contemplating on the merits of God. While meditating on the Divine Name, she may dispel her sin, evil-thoughts, fear and the malady of egoism. In this whole composition, it is explained that such a human being, as is in love with *bani*, gets rid of the above mentioned defects and spontaneously enters into the state of poise. The human body is compared to a couch, which by the Guru's Word is made cosy and the self enjoys the essence of enlightenment. To symbolize union of the self with the Supreme self, the imagery of betrothal in the Indian tradition is employed. God is the source of the enlightenment in spiritual life. He is All Knowledge, meeting with Whom (which is called *Sanjog* here), the human being (who is called woman here), enjoys the essence of spiritual bliss.¹⁵ Again the symbol of *Kuram*, a relationship standing for the bridegroom's or bride's father, has been used for the Guru,¹⁶ who, with the wedding gifts of continence and contentment, arrived to arrange the marriage, to convene the meeting where the holy people sing the Divine word. As the Divine word is sung, the supreme state is attained and it is through *bani* that the wrath, possessiveness, hypocrisy and doubt are removed from the self. It is further told that the female-egoist (*manmukh*), the self-oriented human being, does not attain the nearness of God. Due to the false attachment, falsehood and fraud in her, she bears the agony of separation. She does not follow the path of the Guru, which is difficult to attain without Guru's instructions.¹⁷ Only through the grace of God is one united with the Holy Preceptor. Using all the terms related with marriage such as *lagan* (the auspicious betrothal hour), *Pandha*, *Pandits* (the Brahmin priest), *Patri* (the horoscope), *Sajan* (spouse), *Var* (bridegroom), as symbols, it is explained that when the Supreme Light is manifested in a human being with the grace of the Guru, he/she becomes all-bliss. God is beyond the reach of the five senses. His love is ever new, and He is a Friend from childhood. Once the female (human being) gets union with Him, she remains a married woman, she will never be separated from Him.¹⁸

After the above mentioned *chhant*, whose theme is betrothal,

in the *chhant* of *Lavan* is taken up the celebration of the nuptials. Through this symbol that the union of the self with God is described as marriage. The human being finds that with the first circumambulation, engagement in the duties of the householder (*grahsat*) are confirmed in her mind. One is asked to adopt righteousness of mind and meditate on Divine Name which is like *Brahma Veda* for the seeker. Meditation on Name is *smritis* and *shastras*.¹⁹ The second circumambulation symbolises that the holy Preceptor has united the seeker to the noble attributes of God. Fear of the Lord dwells in the mind, which renders the mind fearless and free of the impurity of egoism.²⁰

In the third circumambulation²¹ is discussed detachment and dispassion. It is not renunciation of the *Vedas* or *Shastras*, which arises from the self-torture or penances. This *Vairag* or detachment means that while doing the duties of this world, man is not to get lost into it. He is to live in detachment. Such freedom from the bondage of worldly attachment, and avarice (according to *Gurbani*, mind cannot be killed, it can only transcend the attachments) leads to a longing to achieve the nearness of the immaculate God, and one takes refuge in *bani* to sing His praise.

In the fourth circumambulation²² the symbol of *Kaj rachayia* has been used. Here, the seeker experiences the love of God, spontaneously. It is all by the Guru's grace and the seeker attains the sweetness and joy of union with God. He attains the balance and it is the stage of effortless living (*sahaj*). His mind and body both are illumined by the Divine Name. This attainment is indestructible, which keeps the state of mind in blissful high spirits. This view is also supported in *Rag Asa*, where the Guru has termed the merger of self with God as marriage (*vivah*). When the self attains God, the human mind and the five senses are attuned to the Highest Truth. This is the highest stage of knowledge when the Reality is revealed to the individual. It signifies a marriage relationship, and God has been termed here as bridegroom (*sahu*) by Guru Nanak.²³ Here, Guru Nanak has called the sense-organs as friends of the bride because they are in harmony with the higher truth.

We find many similar examples in Sri Guru Granth Sahib where the symbol of female has been used for the seeker. Take the *stokas* by Baba Farced. While talking of ethics, he asks what are the

words, the qualities and the jewels that, a seeker should adopt to win the love of God. The answer follows that the word is humility, forgiveness the quality, and sweet speech the jewels to win the Lord forever.²⁴ This quote is used as part of the instructions to a bride on the occasion of her marriage. It is, in fact, meant for the seeker who wants union with God.

It must be clear from the above discussion in what sense the words like female (*Istari*) and male (*Parusha*) have been used. Man cannot be divided in any other sense than that of *gurmukh* (Guru-oriented) and *manmukh* (the egoist). Male or female, he is simply a human being in the eyes of God, who is to strive to attain the union with Him through the Guru. The second thing which follows from this discussion is that man and woman both have equal right to religious knowledge and religious experience and that they have to make the same efforts to achieve their goal in the spiritual field. The third point which comes out clearly is that the spiritual way suggested by Sikhism is a societal one. It is related with society very deeply. It has no place for asceticism or pacifism. It is a *Sahaj marg*, the spontaneous way. Through the recital of the *bani* named *Lavan*, the importance of family life becomes crystal-clear, whereas the earlier religious traditions of India were based on *Vanprasth*, asceticism and pacifism. When a householder's life is stressed, a proper place to woman is a necessary conclusion. Family life is a carriage which cannot move without the efficient co-operation of woman. Another thing, which follows from the above discussion, is that the *Gurmat* way, instead of being limited to a particular individual, is congregational. Man is to learn the *Gurmat* way, the way of a *gurmukh*, for the realization of the Ultimate Reality, the way to attain the Supreme Truth, in the congregation through the Guru. Most of the scholars, interpreting this particular *bani* under the heading *Lavan* or some other *bani* with similar import, forget the real meaning of the *bani*, and take it as a sermon for woman alone. The composition of Guru Ram Das in *Sri Rag*, "*Viahu hoa mere babla*", is also taken in the same sense. They ignore the fact that the Fourth Guru has used the symbol of marriage (*vivahu*), for union with the timeless bridegroom (*akal murat var*). The marriage procession (*janj*) is used in a similar sense.²⁵ The terms 'paternal home' and 'father-in-law's home' are also used symbolically.

The respectful place, which women occupies in Sikh

philosophy and which was not given to her in the earlier Indian thoughts, is clearly brought out by Guru Nanak in *Asa di var*. He brings to light her role in society. The Guru avers that man takes birth from a woman and is conceived inside her. He is engaged to a woman and is married to her. His companionship is with a woman and new generations originate from her. After her death another woman is sought. Man keeps himself in restraint because of a woman and all great men on earth are born of women. From a woman, another woman takes birth and none comes to this world without taking birth from a woman. It is only God, the Holy Eternal One, Who does not take birth from a woman.²⁶

Women have played a very important role in Sikh society. They have equal claim to the spiritual experience and insight into *bani*. From many examples, we can choose just a few to support this view. The first one is Bibi Nanaki, Guru Nanak Dev's elder sister. She was an awakened soul capable of recognizing the spiritual heights in Guru Nanak. She stands with him in every situation. She was the first Sikh. Then there is Bibi Amro, daughter of Angad Dev and married to a nephew of Amar Das. It was from her Amar Das heard the recital of *bani* and was drawn to Guru Angad. He turned away from *Devi* worship and devoted himself to the service of the Guru. All the Gurus have taken to family life, they carried the worldly tradition and started the way of detachment while living the way of the world. Mata Gujri, wife of the great Guru Tegh Bahadur gave birth to a son like Guru Gobind Singh. And she brought up the Guru all alone for seven years and looked after his training in every aspect. We know the tradition of *amrit*. When the Guru was preparing *amrit* in the steel bowl with the double-edged sword, Mata Sahib Devan (according to some Mata Sundri) put sugar *patashas* into it and participated in this great event in the spiritual history of Sikhism. When Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, converted the *sangat* into the Khalsa Panth, he declared himself father of the Khalsa and Mata Sahib Kaur was given the honour of being the mother of the Khalsa. Sikh woman has equal right to *amrit*. Mata Sahib Devan became Sahib Kaur after taking *amrit*. The personality of a Sikh woman is expected to be balanced, ever active and in tune with *bani*, as that of a *gurmukh*.

In the history of ancient India, two great epics were composed - Maha-Bharat and Ramayana which are the combination of

history, philosophy and mythology. There are two great and important women figures in them which become the cause of these two epics also. The disrespect and misbehaviour bestowed upon both of them is known to everybody. The second thing which is most striking in both these characters is that they are not the women who attain the balanced personality of a perfect *gurmukh*. Seeta who is presented as an exemplary woman in ancient Indian culture is swayed by a golden deer and compels Ram to go after it, meaning thereby that inspite of living in forests she could not eradicate attachment for *maya* from her mind. Similar is the case with Daropadi. When Duryodhan hits into glass by mistake she calls him a blind son of a blind father. This shows her unbalanced behaviour, or lack of equipoise. But we do not find such examples in Sikhism. Here, respect for woman and her role have been recognised. A *gurmukh* (male or female) in equipoise, is the accepted form.

The Sikh woman, being an equal member of the Khalsa, is entitled to perform all the duties of a Khalsa. There is the example of Mai Bhago. She gave a new turn to the Sikh history. When the forty Sikhs under the leadership of Bhai Mahan Singh turned away from the Guru and returned to their homes, it was Mai Bhago who led the fight against the Mughal Army at *Khidranedi Dhab*. The forty Sikhs followed her and became martyrs. The place was named Mukatsar after them. They were called 'the liberated ones'. As Prof. Puran Singh observes, "The Sikh woman is as brave a soldier of the Guru as her brother. The sister of Bhai Taru Singh was waylaid by Muslim ruffians as she was going with a basket of food for the Khalsa in the forest. She warned them, they did not listen. They attacked her, when like a flash of lightening woke her *kirpan* sleeping by her side, and the sister defended the honour of the Khalsa. Her foe lay wounded by her side as she fell in a pool of her sacred blood. The Khalsa appeared on the scene, all of a sudden and saw what had happened. A jug of water was brought to comfort her last gasps, but she told them to give it to her Muslim assailant, lying wounded."²⁷ This conveys the true spirit of Sikhism. Prof. Puran Singh sites another example to convey the freedom of Sikh woman. He says, "Never was Eastern woman so free as when she rose like Sundri, the Nurse-Sister of the Khalsa in times when the Sikhs were pitched against the Mughal Empire. Sundri chose her own vocation, dedicated her whole life as the Nurse-Sister alike of the Khalsa and his

foes."²⁸ These are a few examples just to convey the spirit. Now if the Guru wanted, he could have called back his Sikhs or even could have ordered them. But he got the work completed through Mai Bhago just to establish the true spirit of the equality, right and role of the Sikh woman.

After Guru Gobind Singh's death, Mata Sundri issued the decrees (*hukamnamas*) to the Khalsa giving them instructions at a crucial time. This conveys that the Sikh woman has equal rights and can play the role of leadership also. She is not prohibited, like her counterparts in Hinduism and Islam, to enter into any sacred place or to perform any duties. I do not know if there is any gap between the theory and the practice. If it is there, then it is the duty of the Khalsa Panth and the *Jathedars* to look into it. Because if there is any lapse, it is against the spirit of *bani*, and disobedience to the Guru.

Bhai Gurdas, who is the first Sikh theologian, has called woman as better-half and liberated soul. This clears all the traditional and theoretical doubts related to the status of woman. Being the better-half, she is in no way weak or inferior to man. Bhai Gurdas clarifies woman's role when recording the dialogue of Guru Nanak with the *Yogis* in his *Vars*. He tells *Yogi* Bhangarnath that something is wrong in the *Yogi's* rearing up. His mother has not brought him up in a right manner, otherwise how could he have taken to asceticism.²⁹ The Third Guru strictly prohibited Sikh woman from veiling her face or burning herself alive on the funeral pyre of her husband. Woman's contribution in the liberation of humanity is no less than that of man. Since the human body is the best creation of God among all creatures, woman is as capable a corporeal medium as man for the liberation of humanity. Sikhism has no place for the exploitative devices rooted in the class division based on sex. With this woman, while coming out of the wrong conception of being powerless and weak, establishes her capability of being representative of a self-reliant human model. Through *Gurnat* has this model been perfected for the first time in the history of religious philosophies. In the present day world, we hear about so many feminine movements related with woman-liberation. These are all protest movements. According to Prof. Puran Singh, "There is something rotten in the systems of our marriages and social inequalities and the protest is to bring better culture. Much is frivolous futility in such

ill-balanced movements."³⁰ The system provided by *Gurmukh* creates a perfect society in which one can find one's real spiritual worth, strength, moral freedom and all the capabilities of a human being. Prof. Puran Singh, "The whole of Guru Granth is the voice of a wedded woman or a maiden pining in love of the Beautiful. Her nobleness in Guru Granth is infinite, her freedom is of the highest. Both man and woman as sexes are forgotten in her voice. She becomes the Supreme Reality and a freed Soul. In the freed Soul alone is the subordination of one to the other effectively abolished and all disputes hushed."³¹ This is the essence of woman's liberation in Sikhism, she is as capable a human being as man; in temporal as well as spiritual matters.

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PROBLEM OF DATE CONVERSIONS IN SIKH HISTORY

Pal Singh Purewal

The importance of correctness of dates in history can never be overstated. Without dates, history changes into mythology, and incorrect dates could cause a complete mess of sequence of events. Some of the most learned authors and scholars have made glaring errors of calendar conversions from *Bikrami* and *Hijri* Eras to the Common Era. In one case, a date has been assigned to an astronomical event which could not possibly have occurred on that date. The errors in dates are of the following types:

1. The elements contained in the date are self-contradictory, e.g., the week day or *tithi* (lunar day) or *nakshatra* (lunar mansion) is not in agreement with other elements of the date.
2. The conversion to the Common Era date is wrong.
3. Printing errors — Indian authors and printers in general have shown wanton carelessness in this respect.
4. Different dates for the same event are given in the same work or in different works by the same author.
5. Disagreement between historians on the original date, e.g., birth date of Guru Nanak Dev.

The dates recorded in original documents may be in any of the following:

- a. *Bikrami Samvat* (BK)
- b. *Hijri* Era (AH)
- c. Julian or Gregorian Calendar (Christian Era or Common Era), CE.
- d. *Khalsa Samvat*
- e. *Nanak Shahi Samvat*

The interpretation and/or conversion of dates in each case has its own unique problems. A brief information about these eras is provided here, because it is necessary to understand the problems of date conversions.

BIKRAMI SAMVAT

Bikrami Samvat is luni-solar and its year begins on *Chet Sudi* 1. The names of the months for both lunar and solar years are the same, viz., *Chet Vaisakh, Jeth, Harh, Sawan, Bhadon, Asu, Katik, Maghar, Poh, Magh*, and *Phagun*. However, the first month in the case of solar year is *Vaisakh*.

In the period 1469 CE to 2000 CE, the earliest date for *Chet Sudi* 1 was 27th February and latest 14th April according to the Common Era.

PERIOD RANGE OF CE DATES FOR CHET SUDI 1

1469 - 1752 CE	Feb. 27 - Mar. 29 Julian
1753 - 2000 CE	Mar. 11 - Apr. 14 Gregorian

From the date of start of a *Bikrami* year to 31st December, the *Bikrami* Era is ahead of the Common Era by 57 years, but from 1st January to the last date of the *Bikrami* year the difference is 56 years.

The lunar year begins on *Chet Sudi* 1, the first day after the new moon in the month of *Chet*. The lunar year is approximately 11 days shorter than the solar year. This results in the beginning of the next lunar year about 11 days earlier in relation to the Common Era year. However, when two new moons (*amavasyas*) occur in the same *Bikrami* solar month, then an extra lunar month of the same name is added to that lunar year. The extra month is called *adhika mas* or *mal mas* (intercalary month). Whenever in a year *mal mas* occurs, the beginning of the next lunar year happens 18 or 19 days later. This ensures that the same lunar date will fluctuate back and forth within a month, but will never deviate beyond that. This way lunar year stays in step with the solar year. On the average, there are 7 *adhika* months in a period of 19 years. Example of *mal mas* is the month of *Bhadon* in 2050 BK (1993-94 CE).

Rarely does it happen that there is no *amavasya* (new moon) in a *Bikrami* solar month. In that case that lunar month is dropped, and it is called a *khshya* month. This would give 11 lunar months in that

year, but when this happens there is invariably an *adhika* (intercalary) month too in the same year, so that the total months in such a year still remain 12.

The lunar month is divided into two halves, the bright half and the dark half. When the moon waxes from new moon to full moon, it is known as *sudi* or *shukla* fortnight. There are 15 *sudis* (lunar days) from *sudi* 1 to *sudi* 15. *Sudi* 15 is the full moon day or the *poommashi*. After full moon the dark fortnight, called the *vadi* or Krishna fortnight, begins. There are 15 *vadis* (lunar days). *Vadi* 15 is the *amavasya* day (new moon). Each of the lunar days is called *tithi*. Only the *tithi* which is current at the time of sunrise is associated with that day. Duration of a *tithi* varies from 20 hours 15 minutes to 26 hours 47 minutes. Therefore, occasionally same *tithi* may be current at two consecutive sunrises. In that case, that *tithi* will be associated with 2 consecutive dates. Also, a *tithi* may begin just after sunrise and end just before next sunrise. In this case that *tithi* is not current at any sunrise and is not shown, and is called *khshya* or dropped *tithi*. In fact, both the *tithis* are assigned to the same date.

THE BIKRAMI SOLAR YEAR

The solar year begins on 1st of *Vaisakh* when the sun completes its annual journey of the Indian fixed zodiac, and enters the first sign *Mekh* (Aries). The new month starts on the day on which the sun moves from one sign of the zodiac to the next. If this event happens after midnight, even though the CE date has changed, it is still considered to have occurred on the previous CE date, because of sunrise to sunrise definition of day. The beginning of the *Bikrami* solar year (*Vaisakhi* or the 1st of *Vaisakh*) in CE dates for some periods are as follows:

1469 CE to 1752 CE (Julian)	27 March to 30 March.
1753 CE to 1970 CE (Gregorian)	9 April to 13 April.
1971 CE to 2000 CE (Gregorian)	13 April to 14 April.

Now let us examine a few dates.

- 1) Prof. Sahib Singh in his book *Jeevan Britant Guru Nanak Dev ji* (Punjabi) writes on page 242: "The month of *Rajab* of the *Hijri* year occurred in May, 1530 A.D. Guru Nanak Dev Ji went to the Shivaratri fair in March, 1530." The dates are totally wrong. Neither

the fair was in March, 1530 A.D., nor the month of *Rajab* occurred in May, 1530 A.D. *Shivaratri* fair occurred on January 28 in that year and the months of *Ramzan* and *Shawwal* were current in May of the same year. This is not all. The same author in his book *Sidha Gost Steek* on page 12 gives "*Phagun Samvat 1587 (March, 1530)*" as the date for the same event. *Phagun*, 1587 BK converts to January/February, 1531 AD, and the fair was on 14th February of that year. The learned professor's conversion of that date is out by 1 year. That is not the end of the story. In the same book, on page 36 he writes, "It appears that the *Gost* with the *Sidhas* took place in February/March in 1539 A.D." The fair in 1539 A.D. was on 17th February. Here, he differs from himself by 9 years!

The same author gives the date of the visit to Kurukshetra by Guru Nanak Dev on the solar eclipse fair, as 14th September, 1515 A.D. But, there was no solar eclipse on that date. The solar eclipse in August of that year was not visible in India. The book '*Jeevan Britant Guru Nanak Dev Ji*', is full of such mistakes.

- 2) The birthday of Guru Hargobind by most authors is given as *Harh vadi 1*, 1652 BK (lunar), 21st *Harh* (solar), 1652 BK. There is contradiction in this date. *Harh vadi 1* was on 14th *Harh* and not 21st *Harh*, and on 21st *Harh* it was *Harh vadi 7*. The equivalent CE date for 21st *Harh*/*Harh vadi 7* is 19th June 1595 CE, and for 14th *Harh*/*Harh vadi 1* it is 12th June, 1595. Dr Ganda Singh in his *Nanak Shahi Jantri* (Urdu) gives correctly 19th June as the birth date of the Guru, but the same author with Principal Teja Singh in their book *Sikh Itihas* (Punjabi translation by Dr Bhagat Singh) gives 14th June, 1595 CE as the birth date. This date converted to indigenous calendar date becomes 16th *Harh*/*Harh vadi 3*, which is completely out of tune with dates given by all other writers. Historians will have to decide which date to accept as correct: whether 21st *Harh*/*Harh vadi 7* or 14th *Harh*/*Harh vadi 1*.
- 3) Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru, left the fortress of Chamkaur Sahib on 8th *Poh*, 1761 BK. Anniversary of this event is celebrated in *Poh* in Chamkaur Sahib. Most authors give equivalent date as 22nd December, 1704 CE (Julian). But the correct conversion of this date is 7th December, 1704 CE, a difference of 15 days. This difference is very significant. The Guru in his account of the battle as mentioned in *Zafarnamah* (letter written in Persian and

addressed to Aurangzeb the Moghul Emperor) says:

*"Chiraghe jahane shudah burqah posh
Shabe shah braamad hamah jalwah josh
Nah pecheedah mooye nah ranjeedah tan
Ke beroon khud aaward dushman shikan".*

Translation:

"When the lamp of the world put veil on its face (implying when the sun had set), and the king of night (moon) came out with glory ---- not a hair (on my person) got bent and (my) body did not receive any injury, because the Destroyer of Enemies Himself brought (me) outside."

Now, on 22nd December, moon set time was at about midnight while on 7th December, 1704 CE the time of moon rise was at about midnight. The historians say that the Guru left the fortress at about 2 am (night of 22nd and 23rd December) in the dark when moon had set. But, according to the Guru's own account, he left the fortress when moon was up. This date corresponds with 7th December, 1704 A.D. or *Poh 8*, 1761 BK.

It must be noted here that authors are divided on the year of this event. Some give 1761 BK while others give 1762 BK, but most agree on *Poh 8*. The date 8th *Poh*, 1762 BK converts to 7th December, 1705, Friday, *Poh sudi 2*. On *sudi 2*, moon is usually very thin crescent. This does not agree with the text of *Zafarnamah*.

The times of rising and setting of the sun and the moon on the above two dates for the latitude and longitude of Chamkaur Sahib, in Indian Standard Time are as under:

sunrise	-	7th December, 1704, 7.17 am
sunset	-	7th December, 1704, 5.26 pm
moonrise	-	7th December, 1704, 11.43 pm
sunrise	-	7th December, 1705, 7.17 am
sunset	-	7th December, 1705, 5.26 pm
moonset	-	7th December, 1705, 7.28 pm

The date of 8th *Poh*, 1761 BK introduces another variable into the picture. It makes an extra year available for the historians to account for the Guru's sojourns in the Malwa Desh. Perhaps, he stayed 1

year and 9 months in Talwandi Sahbo (Damdama Sahib) instead of the usual 9 months that is mentioned. But, this is for the historians to look into, and is not in my domain.

- 4) The date of creation of the Khalsa is given by most authors as *Vaisakh* 1, 1756 BK. The corresponding CE date is given as 30th March, 1699 CE. The correct CE date is 29th March, 1699, CE (Julian), Wednesday. Ratan Singh Bhangu gives the day as Wednesday, but the year given by him as 1752 BK is incorrect (as quoted in *Sri Gur Sobha* by Sainapat, Edited by Dr Ganda Singh).
- 5) The problem of *gata varsha* (completed year) and *vartman* (current) year: In some *Janam Sakhis*, birth year and *Jyoti Jot* (merging into Eternal Light) year of Guru Nanak Dev are given as 1525 BK and 1595 BK, respectively. These years converted to CE become 1468 and 1538, respectively. The historians interpret 1525 BK and 1595 BK as completed years rather than the current years. As a result, they argue that, in the current mode of recording the date, the years would be 1526 BK and 1596 BK converting to 1469 CE and 1539 CE, respectively. But the question is: Is this the only date recorded in *gat* format? The answer must be: No. Many other dates have to be looked at from that angle.
- 6) In *Sri Gur Sobha* by Sainapat on page 35, the date of Hussaini battle is given as 23rd *Phagun*, 1752 BK (20th March, 1696). The date converts to 19th February, 1696 CE, and is out by one month. On the previous page, he gives the date of the *Nadaun Yuddh* as 22nd *Chet*, 1747 BK, 20th March, 1691. The conflict between the two conversions is obvious. It cannot be 20th March for *Phagan* 23 in one year and for *Chet* 22 in another.
- 7) a) On page 158 of *Sri Gur Sobha* by Sainapat, the *Hijri* date, 12th *Safar*, 1094 AH is converted to 3rd January, 1683. The correct conversion is 31st January, 1683. An expert in history can notice such mistakes, but for a layman it is impossible. How can one read "31" in place of "3", where "1" possibly got omitted in the print?
- b) In *Hukamnameh* (Punjabi), edited by Dr Ganda Singh on page 47, the date for *Hukamnamah* 41 is given as 'Asu vadi 10 samvat 1749 BK; 9th Oct., 1792 AD' and on page 141, for the same *Hukamnamah*, the date is given as 'Asu vadi 10 samvat 1749 BK; 25th December, 1692 A.D.' The copy has not been checked

properly for printing errors, and even in subsequent edition, the error has not been rectified. There are too many things wrong here. The year 1792 in the first date is out by 100, probably a printing or typographical error; but October 9 is definitely wrong. Then in the second set, if December is changed to September the conversion becomes correct. Probably this is also a typing error. The correct conversion of *Asu vadi* 10, 1749 BK to Common Era is 25th September, 1692. The note by the Vice-Chancellor about the second edition, "... Second edition of this (book) is being printed by photo offset process so that no room is left for error", makes interesting reading, but what about all those mistakes which were there in the first edition?

THE DATE OF FOUNDING OF AKAL TAKHT

As an example of a typical problem, and its resolution by the author, the date of founding of *Sri Akal Takht Sahib* as given in *Gurbilas Patshahi* 6 by luni solar is discussed here in detail.

Many views prevail on the date the foundation of *Akal Takht* was laid. In his book '*Sri Akal Takht*', Sukhdial Singh quotes the following 2 lines from *Gurbilas Patshahi* 6 of Kavi Sohan:

Harh panchami ko din jaan
Sri Guru Uddam keen mahaan.

Next 2 lines are:

Gurdas Buddhay ko lai nij saath
Takht arambh kar Deena Naath

Here, the date given by Kavi Sohan will be examined in detail.

The sequence of events from the date of martyrdom of Guru Arjun, as given by Sukhdial Singh, is as follows:

1. Martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev — *Jeth sudi* 4, 1663 BK.
2. Congregation of Sikh *sangat* in front of *Harimandar Sahib* on 1st *Harh*.
3. Guru Hargobind's ascension to *guruship* — 1st *Harh*.
4. According to revelation received from *Akal Purakh*, the Guru laid the foundation brick of *Akal Takht* on *Harh panchami*; rest of the construction work was done by Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha.

Sukhdial Singh says that it is clear from the dates given by Kavi Sohan that on the 13th day after the martyrdom date of Guru Arjun Dev, on *Harh* 1, the Guru accepted the *tilak* of *gurunship*. After further arguments, he accepts Kavi Sohan's date of *Harh sudi panchami* as the correct date of construction of Akal Takht.

It should be noted that Kavi Sohan has not mentioned *sudi* or *vadi* in his date. The word *sudi* has been introduced by Sukhdial Singh. Dr Harjinder Singh Dilgeer also gives *Harh sudi 5* in his book *The Akal Takht Sahib*. Kavi Sohan gives the date as *Harh panchami*. It has 3 interpretations:

- a) 5th day of the month of solar *Harh*, i.e., 4 days after *sankranti* of *Harh*.
- b) *Harh vadi 5*, which is the 5th day after *Jeth sudi 15* (5th day after *pooranmashi* of lunar month of *Jeth*).
- c) *Harh sudi 5*, which is 5 days after *Harh amavasya* and 15 days after *Harh vadi 5*.

Let me give the dates mentioned above, in the Common Era, so that the problem which is transparent in these dates becomes apparent.

1. Martyrdom day of Guru Arjun - *Jeth sudi 4*, 1663 BK; 30th May, 1606, Friday.
2. *Harh 1* (*sankranti*) was on 29th May, Thursday.
3. *Harh 5* was on 2nd June, Monday.
4. *Harh vadi 1* was on 11th June, Wednesday.
5. *Harh vadi 5* was on 15th June, Sunday.
6. *Harh sudi 5* was on 30th June, Monday.

In his book *Katha Puratan Eon Suni* (section on *Dabistan-e-Mazahib* by Mohsin Fani), Principal Satbir Singh gives 2nd *Harh*, 30th May as the date of martyrdom, which is correct.

Amritsar is 50 kilometres from Lahore. The news of martyrdom of the Guru would have reached Amritsar within hours on the same day. The 13th day after the martyrdom was *Harh vadi 1* (not *Harh 1*), corresponding to 11th June.

Principal Satbir Singh in the same book (section on *Gurbilas Patshahi* 6) says, that recitation of Granth Sahib was completed after 12 days (i.e., on 13th day), and the ceremony of *Dastar* and *Miri-Piri* swords was performed. On Sunday, *Harh panchami*, the Guru laid the foundation brick.

If *Harh sudi* 5 is to be accepted as given by Sukhdial Singh, then it would mean 30th June, 1606, which is not the 5th day from formal assumption of Guruship, and also it would be Monday, not Sunday as given by Principal Satbir Singh.

Since the day corresponds with *Harh vadi panchami*, Kavi Sohan must have meant *Harh vadi panchami*, when he said *Harh panchami*. Moreover, in Northern India, Lunar months begin with *vadi* 1. Kavi Sohan's date is given in lunar format, and by default lunar month date is implied. Therefore, *Harh panchami* means the 5th day of the lunar month of *Harh* viz., *Harh vadi* 5.

The correct sequence of events using Kavi Sohan's date (after removing ambiguity of *Harh panchami*) would be as follows:

1. Martyrdom day of Guru Arjun — 30th May, 1606 CE (*Jeth sudi* 4, 1663, 2nd *Harh*, Friday).
2. *Arambh* of *Sehaj Path* of Granth Sahib — same day.
3. *Bhog* of *Path* on 13th day — 11th June, 1606 (*Harh vadi* 1, Wednesday); *Dastar Bandi* and *Miri-Piri* ceremony Guru Hargobind.
4. Foundation brick *Sri Akal Takht* laid by Guru Hargobind - 15th June, 1606 (*Harh vadi* 5, Sunday).

HIJRI CALENDAR

The *Hijri* calendar is purely a lunar calendar. The era commenced on 16th July, 622 CE. This calendar is in use in Muslim countries along with the Common Era calendar. There are no intercalary months introduced to keep it in step with the seasons. The 12 months in the year may each have 29 or 30 days. No month can have less than 29 or greater than 30 days. The lunar month begins, for religious purposes, at the moment of the first visibility of the moon after new moon in the evening sky. However, the first day of the month is considered to start from the next morning.

Because *Hijri* year is purely a lunar one, its year is shorter than

the CE year by 10 to 12 days. Therefore, festival dates that are fixed according to this calendar fall earlier by 10 to 12 days in each succeeding year of the Common Era. Beginning day of the *Hijri* year makes a complete circle of the Common Era year in 33 CE years, so that there are approximately 34 *Hijri* years in 33 CE years.

There is also another type of *Hijri* calendar in use, based on average length of the month rather than the first visibility of moon. This has fixed number of days in each month. Starting from *Muharram*, the first month, months have alternately 30 and 29 days. This gives 354 days to the year. Last month may have 30 days in *Hijri* leap years. There are 11 leap years in a cycle of 30 years. Leap years have 355 days each. This makes 10,631 days in 30 *Hijri* years. Use of this scheme would result in the calendar being out of step with the crescent moon by 1 day in about 2,500 years. Historians use this calendar for conversion of dates to the Common Era. If conversion is done correctly, it could be out by 1 day or 2 days at the most. However, if the week day is also given in the original date, then converted date could be adjusted accordingly to arrive at the correct date.

Now, let us look at 2 dates converted from *Hijri* to Common Era. The source is *Ma'asire Alamgiri* (Persian) by Must'aad Khan edited by Fauja Singh, translated into Punjabi by Darshan Singh Awara:

1. Page 6, "... the astrologers had predicted Friday, 1st *Zilqidah*, 1068 AH (21st July, 1658) ... as an auspicious day..."

On 21st July, 1658 CE (Julian) it was Wednesday. Therefore, the correct date is 23rd July, 1658 CEJ.

2. Page 476 gives the date of death of Aurangzeb as Friday, 28th *Zilqidah*, 1118 AH (20th February, 1707 CEJ).

It was Thursday on 20th February, 1707 CEJ. Therefore, the correct date is 21st February, 1707 CEJ.

Obviously, the person who did the original conversion did not perform the check for week day. The date of 20th February is very commonly quoted by Indian writers, perhaps its source is Jadu Nath Sarkar. The Oxford History of India, Vincent Smith, correctly gives 21st February.

COMMON ERA

The Christian Era abbreviated as AD or BC, now-a-days is more commonly known as Common Era, abbreviated as CE or BCE. as the case may be, since the adoption or parallel use of its calendar in most countries of the world. Prior to 1582 CE, the leap year rule was: if a year was divisible by 4 without remainder, it was a leap year. This gave an average length of 365.25 days in a year. This length is a little more than the length of the solar year which is 365.2422 days. Therefore, the beginning of the year in the Julian Calendar, as it was called, occurred a little later every year in relation to the spring equinox. In the year 325 CE, the spring equinox (day and night equal) had occurred on 21st March, but because of gradual advance of the beginning of Julian year, spring equinox occurred on 11th March, 1582 CE. Thus, the calendar was getting out of tune with the seasons.

Pope Gregory on the recommendation of his astronomer, introduced the reform to the Julian calendar, removing this discrepancy and altering the leap year rule. The Pope ordained that 5th October, 1582 be designated as 15th October (losing 10 days from the calendar), and that the years completely divisible by 4 be leap years, with the proviso that century years be leap years only if completely divisible by 400. The new calendar was called the Gregorian calendar. This change was implemented by some countries immediately. England and the United States continued using Julian calendar. They switched to the Gregorian calendar in September, 1752 when the difference between the two calendars had become 11 days, designating 3rd September, 1752 as 14th, thus dropping 11 days. With the reformed Gregorian calendar, there will be an error of 1 day in approximately 3300 years in relation to the true solar year.

Because of the change over from Julian to Gregorian calendar, the beginning of the years of other eras started occurring 10 or 11 days later in relation to the Common Era after the change.

Most Indian historians have been converting dates using change over in 1752 CE while others use change over in 1582 CE. So, the dates given by two historians for the same event, for the period 5th October, 1582 CE (Julian) to 2nd September 1752 CE (Julian) may differ by 10 or 11 days if one chooses the change over in 1582 CE and

the other in 1752 CE. To avoid confusion for dates between the two change overs, 'old style (os)' or 'new style (ns)' is given along with the date by some authors.

KHALSA SAMVAT

Like *Bikrami Samvat*, *Khalsa Samvat* is also luni solar. Its month names, rules for determination of *Sankrantis*, and *tithis* are the same. However, popularly this *Samvat* is thought to be solar rather the luni-solar. The solar year begins on 1st *Vaisakh* (*Vaksakhi* day). First month is *Vaisakh* and the last month is *Chet*. Year 1 of Khalsa Era started on 1st *Vaisakh*, 1756 BK, 29th March, 1699 CE, Wednesday, the date of creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh.

From the starting date of a Khalsa Era year to 31st December, the common Era is ahead by 1698 years and from 1st of January to the last date of the Khalsa Era year, it is ahead by 1699 years.

NANAK SHAHI SAMVAT

This *Samvat* started on the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev. Traditionalists start the new year on *Kartik sudi 15, Poommasi*. Lunar and solar dates of this Era are the same as those of the *Bikrami Samvat*. Modern researches believe *Vaisakh sudi 3*, 1526 BK to be the birth date of Guru Nanak Dev. The writer agrees with Dr Ganda Singh (*Mukhtasir Nanak Shahi Jantri* – Urdu) that irrespective of which birth date is correct, the Era should start on the first day of the year of birth, i.e., *Vaisakh 1*, 1526 BK. Therefore, *Nanak Shahi Samvat 1* should be considered to have started on *Vaisakh 1*, 1526 BK, 27th March, 1469 CE.

Moreover, according to the calculations done by the writer, the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev was on *Vaisakh 1*, 1526 BK, March 27, 1469 CE, Monday, *Poommasi*.

THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

The main reason for these errors was lack of availability of detailed almanacs (*jantris*) for the earlier period. Historians and scholars had to work their way from scanty information available regarding the beginning of the *Bikrami* and *Hijri* years in relation to the Christian calendar. With good knowledge of the *Bikrami* and Christian

calendars, one could convert the dates of one into the other with an accuracy of one day. However, in the case of lunar dates of the *Bikrami* Era, the problem gets compounded by the *adhika masas* or *malmasas* or *laund* months — intercalary months. If the correct intercalary month is not known, when it occurs in a particular year, the conversion could be easily out by a month.

Dr Ganda Singh, realising these problems, while working on his research projects in Sikh history, made noteworthy effort by way of calculating the beginning of the solar *Bikrami* years in relation to the Christian calendar. For these dates, he gave the *Hijri* calendar dates and the *tithis* (lunar dates) of the lunar months of the *Bikrami* Era. He published his tables called '*Mukhtasir Nanak Shahi Jantri*', in Urdu. In this almanac, he also gave a table of intercalary months. It would suffice here to say that there are inaccuracies in the main table, and the table of intercalary months is not very accurate. Moreover, since the corresponding dates for *Vaisakh* 1 (beginning of the *Bikrami* solar year) only are given for each year, the *Jantri* cannot be of much help to researchers working with wide spectrum of dates.

The Five Hundred Year Almanac for 1469 CE to 1968 CE (*Bikrami* 1525/26 to *Bikrami* 2024/25, *Hijri* 873/74 to 1387/88), by the author of this paper, calculated according to *Surya Sidhanta* on daily basis, would provide in one volume the facility to convert dates of calendars from one era to another without any calculation at all. Almanac is also provided for 1960 CE to 2000 CE calculated according to modern methods.

This work could prove very useful to researchers, historians, students, speakers and laymen to fix date of a particular event in any of the given eras.

CONCLUSIONS

The problem of accurate conversion and of checking the accuracy of original dates given in *Bikrami* and *Hijri* eras was due to lack of availability of detailed almanacs and lack of expertise in this field by historians, and to a certain extent due to the carelessness by the authors, while working with the dates. This author's '*Jantri 500*' could be of great help in solving this problem for the period 1469 CE onwards.

NOTES:

1. All Common Era dates up to 2nd September, 1752 are in Julian calendar.
2. CEJ denotes Common Era Julian.
3. BK stands for *Bikrami Samvat*.
4. AH for *Hijri* Era.

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PROPOSED NEW CALENDAR FOR NANAKSHAHI SAMVAT

Pal Singh Purewal

CHANGING VAISAKHI DATE

The solar year of the *Bikrami Samvat* begins on the first of *Vaisakh*, when the sun enters into the *Mekh rasi* (Aries sign). In the year 522, CE *Vaisakhi* occurred on 19th March, the day of the spring equinox. The *Bikrami* solar year was longer than the Julian year. This caused *Vaisakhi* to occur later by 1 day every 114 years on the average. In 1469 CE, it occurred on 27th March. Even the length of the Julian year was a little longer than the length of the true solar year. In 325 CE, spring equinox was on 21st March. But, because of the incorrect length of the Julian year, the spring equinox was also occurring earlier by 1 day every 128 years. By the year 1582 CE, the spring equinox occurred on 11th March.

Pope Gregory ordered corrections to the Julian calendar and ordained that 5th October, 1582 will be designated as 15th October, thus dropping 10 dates from the calendar.

Some European countries implemented this change in 1582 CE and adopted the Gregorian calendar. United States and England adopted it in 1752 CE when the difference between the old and new calendars had become 11 days. These countries switched over to the Gregorian calendar designating 3rd September, 1752 as 14th September, dropping 11 dates from the calendar for that year. With this correction, the spring equinox started occurring again on 20th or 21st March each year.

In 1752 CE, *Vaisakhi* occurred on 29th March, but next year in 1753 CE it occurred on 9th April because of the above correction of 11 days; viz., switching over from Julian to Gregorian calendar. The gradual shifting of *Vaisakhi* from 9th April, 1752 CE to 13th or 14th April in more recent years is because the *Bikrami* year is not a true solar year. Its year is sidereal and it is longer than a solar year.

THE SOLAR YEAR

The time it takes the sun in its apparent motion to go through the 12 *rasis* (signs) starting from the first point of Aries (*Mekh*), is called solar year. Its length is 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 46 seconds, i.e., 365.2422 days.

THE BIKRAMI SOLAR YEAR

The *Bikrami* solar year actually is not a solar year but a sidereal year. The first point of Aries (*Mekh*) in the Indian system is fixed in space in the background of stars, but in the Western system it has a retrograde motion of 50.3 seconds of arc. To complete a revolution of the Indian zodiac, the sun has to cover this extra 50.3 seconds of arc which is equivalent to 20 minutes and 24.5 seconds in time. That is why the *Bikrami* year is longer than the true solar year by the same length of time.

The length of the year according to *Surya Sidhanta* is 365 days, 6 hours, 12 minutes and 36 seconds. This length had been used by almanac makers up to the nineteen sixties. This length was wrong. The correct length of the sidereal year is 365 days 6 hours, 9 minutes and 9.8 seconds. Now-a-days many almanac makers use this length of the year, and calculate *sankrantis* on the basis of this year.

Though the present day almanac makers have discarded the *Surya Sidhanti* length of the year, they are still adhering to the sidereal year instead of the solar year. As has been mentioned earlier, this sidereal year is longer than the solar year by 20 minutes and 24.5 seconds. As a result of this, *Vaisakhi* will occur later by 1 day every 70.56 years, on the average.

The calculation of the beginning of the *Khalsa Samvat* and all *sankrantis* is based on the *Bikrami Samvat* and its year length is the same as that of the *Bikrami* 'solar' year.

If the length of the *Khalsa Samvat* is not changed to the length of the true solar year, then *Vaisakhi* will go on advancing in relation to the Common Era calendar and in 13,000 years it will start occurring in middle of October, and other months will also occur in opposite seasons. It will be summer in *Poh* and winter in *Harh*, wheat will be sown in *Jeth* and spring will be in *Asu*. There will be complete reversal of seasons in relation to the Indian months. Because of this wrong

length of the year, the seasons will be opposite to those as given with the month names under *Barah Mahas* and *Ruti Gurbani*.

For the rectification of this problem, the following suggestions and possible alternatives are offered for a new calendar for *Nanakshahi Samvat*, so that its months become fixed in relation to seasons for all time to come.

1. The *Khalsa* or the *Nanakshahi Samvat* should be divorced from *Bikrami Samvat*. We should lead in reform rather than wait until *Panchang* makers decide to reform the *Bikrami* calendar. As has been mentioned, reforms to calendars have been done before. Even most Indian *Panchang* makers discarded *Surya Sidhant* in favour of modern astronomical formulas for calculating the *Panchangas*. The *Panchangas*, *Jantris* and *Tith Patrikas* published in Punjab have all switched over to the modern methods. The *sankrantis* calculated on the basis of *Surya Sidhanta* and modern methods, may in some cases differ by 1 day.
2. The beginning of the *Khalsa Samvat* be fixed in relation to the Common Era. Many dates are worth considering. *Vaisakhi* may be fixed on April 1. This date is close to the spring equinox. *Sankrantis* were very close to date 1 of the Julian calendar in 1699, the year of the creation of the *Khalsa*. From 1469 to September 1752, *sankrantis* occurred close to date 1st of each month of the Julian calendar. With the change to Gregorian calendar in 1752, *sankrantis* moved ahead by 11 days.

Switching over *Vaisakhi* from 13/14 April to 1st April might be too drastic a change and might not go well with the Sikh masses, and its implementation would need drastically changing the length of the month of *Chet* just once at the time of change over.

The next date to consider is 14th April, which may probably be the most acceptable date for fixing *Vaisakhi*.

3. The next step is to fix the number of days in each month. The following scheme would keep the beginning of all months very close to the dates of the present *sankrantis*:

Chet, *Vaisakh*, *Jeth*, *Harh*, and *Sawan*: 31 days each;
Bhadon, *Asu*, *Katik*, *Maghar*, *Poh*, *Magh*, and *Phagun*: 30 days each.

Phagun may have 31 days in a leap year.

4. With the suggestions outlined above the *sankrantis* (1st day) of each month would correspond to the Common Era as follows:

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---|----------------|
| 1. | <i>Chet</i> | : | 14th March |
| 2. | <i>Vaisakh</i> | : | 14th April |
| 3. | <i>Jeth</i> | : | 15th May |
| 4. | <i>Harh</i> | : | 15th June |
| 5. | <i>Sawan</i> | : | 16th July |
| 6. | <i>Bhadon</i> | : | 16th August |
| 7. | <i>Asu</i> | : | 15th September |
| 8. | <i>Katik</i> | : | 15th October |
| 9. | <i>Maghar</i> | : | 14th November |
| 10. | <i>Poh</i> | : | 14th December |
| 11. | <i>Magh</i> | : | 13th January |
| 12. | <i>Phagun</i> | : | 12th February |

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SIKH STUDIES AS A PARADIGM IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Dr Noel Q. King

The academic world abounds in myths. Each one has to be examined, for some may contain valuable material. For example, the "Idea of the University" is said to have arisen in Islam of the middle ages at Baghdad and Cairo. It apparently travelled by way, of Tunis and Morocco to Cordoba, and thence to Paris, Oxford, Heidelberg and on to Harvard. Dr Amrik Singh, in his Preface to one of the Commonwealth Universities' Year-Books, outlines in part how the pattern of Oxford, Cambridge, and London of the nineteenth century, with its many parallel in Germany, France and America, has been carried to India, and other Commonwealth countries. In the matter of Comparative Religion, it is said, this study arose in Europe, when "the Enlightenment" had begun its work of pushing the dominance of religious (i.e., in this case Judaeo-Christian) thought to one side and enabling critical, scientific, analytical thought to function. When we turn to the work of Max Mueller, Sir James Fraser and James Legge and their ilk, we find them ostensibly in command of material of a world-wide character, including Buddhism, Chinese Religions, Islam, Hinduism as well as Aboriginal Australian and African Religions. They appear to be operating at an ecumenical level. The apparatus of dialectical materialism and modern scientific literary and textual criticism has also been brought in, and the study of Comparative Religion seems to be on a sound and secure basis. •

As in so much else, it is Sikhism which has come forward to say: "Stop and reconsider". The leadership given by Sardar Daljeet Singh and his associates is manifest.

A full examination of the case put forward deserves detailed and comprehensive treatment. Here it must suffice to outline a few points taken at random.

First, the general notion of "religion" is still too western, still

unfortunately based on the thinking of Roman legal terms, too little on the fullness of experience. That is to say that Religion has been separated from the wholeness of life, from Politics, from Philosophy, even from Ethics. What Sardar Daljeet Singh of blessed memory called "whole-life religion" has been made into an anomaly. Throughout, the implication seems to be that there was no research, no higher education of University level, till the western University idea was introduced. Here, especially Sikh scholarship is challenged to help us to understand more fully the achievement of Bhai Gurdas and the Gurus with whom he worked and particularly more about the schools of learning brought together by the Tenth *Padshah* at Anandpur Sahib and Damdama Sahib. The evolutionary pattern is often imposed by modern scholars in places, where it is misleading, and still there lurks the idea that the modern West is the highest and the best.

Too often, modern methodology vitiates the possibility of results at the deepest level. Thus, to treat the oral tradition with little respect and to impose "a hermeneutic of suspicion" on every detail of a traditional narrative, again and again lands us in futility. Agnostics and atheists are of course most welcome to join in the study, but to impose an absolute methodological agnosticism on all of us means, we cease to be objective in our analysis of all the possible phenomena. Especially, in the study of Scripture, the present ruling paradigm of study must be challenged. It cannot be granted that a Scripture is just one more piece of literary work, to be treated as an artefact, just one other book. A Scripture, especially when it belongs to and is integrated in a community, is not to be treated as a cadaver in the hands of anatomists. If it is, the study can easily disintegrate into a post mortem. The possibility that the divine can speak directly, must be taken seriously. A Prophet or Guru or any other genuinely divinely inbreathed person can tell forth the Will of God. It is not merely that their faculties have been enhanced, or that they imagine they have entered into the divine Court.

Our modern methods are particularly weak, when it comes to studying a text which is integrated into a community and the inmost springs of thought and action of each individual in it. This is even more so, when one studies the history of a community where ontology is strongly developed. That is, to state it partially, where the religion is seen to develop throughout with the end product and design of the

whole in view, that enseeded pattern which is in the corporate mind of the community. Believers would add "in the purposes of the Divine Spirit behind the whole process." The oak is in a real way in the acorn and in the sapling.

There is much else one could say. The immediate outcome is that we must find some other pattern of study in Comparative Religion. Already in 1979, the first edition of Sardar Daljeet Singh's 'Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism' had appeared. It is a major achievement unsurpassed in its logical and analytical approach and its rational setting forth of a Sikhism squarely based on sound exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib. Its approach to the other world religions, both eastern and western as well as primal, is open-minded, understanding and sympathetic, yet academic and objective. In his other works, there is much else which uses Sikhism centrally and in addition refers to other religions. An outstanding example is the Sardar's grasp of what revelation and humanness mean. There is much in the Sardar's ideas, relevant to the study of Comparative Religion, emanating from his understanding of the ways of God and humans, as we understood their working in Sikhism, which demands our follow up. This is not only with regard to the doctrines of God, humanity and revelation which have been mentioned above, but to add some other examples, it includes the doctrines of grace, God's purpose in the world and in history, and the nature and task of a religious body or corpus such as the Khalsa, not only in its self-being, but in its world-wide and eternal task of overcoming that which threatens the purpose of the divine Guru. A great amount of work lies ahead, but Sardar Daljeet Singh, here and in so many ways has shown us the way ahead. Koine and Septuagintal Greek both use the expression 'archegos', — 'trail-blazed', 'pioneer who discovers the way and leads us in it'. Truly the Sardar fulfills this divinely ordained role.

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ROLE OF TRADITIONS IN SIKH HISTORIOGRAPHY

Dr Kirpal Singh

Traditions and legends play a very significant role in the Sikh historiography. Tradition implies "handing down of opinion, beliefs and practices to posterity unwritten" (Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary). Legends connotation is "story handed down from generations and popularly believed to have historical basis" (Webster's World Dictionary). A powerful tradition tends to be a legend in the course of time. Therefore, the role of both in historiography is similar. The *Janamsakhis*, *Gurbilas* and *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, represent the written form of traditions and legends of the Sikhs. It is, therefore, very important to study the historical validity of traditions and legends as a source of information.

The legend formation has been the universal phenomenon. The first impulse which brought about the stories of great men, was based on the elements of wonder and amazement at the marvellous deeds of the heroes. Men accepted as true and authentic, whatever was repeated to them of the deeds of gods or heroes. It is for this reason that Alfred Lyall states that "the hazy atmosphere, marvellous and miraculous, obscures all early origin of race and religion, and clouds the beginning of history".¹ The dry land of authentic history emerges slowly out of the sea of fables. The delight in awe and astonishment is superseded by a taste for accurate thought and rigorous evidence. Toynbee has rightly stated that the historian's point of view is one of mankind's more recent acquisitions.²

The legends about the great heroes in the past form the earliest source of information. A man who has made his mark upon generation who oversteps the rest by bravery, piety or some peculiar powers of mind or body, becomes among the folk the source and subject of a legend. These legends rescued and transmitted to posterity are what could be saved out of a flood of deep oblivion. Thus, however exaggerated or complicated a legend might be, it is based on a kernel

of truth. At times, that kernel may be very small. Sometimes, the attending circumstances make the situation complicated. Thus, while studying any piece of religious literature, like the *Janamsakhis*, one has to keep in mind the process of legend formation.

The traditions about Guru Nanak's achievements got current when he was still alive. The contemporaries began to talk about his great itineraries, his visit to Mecca, Madina and Baghdad, his discourses with *Pirs* of Uch and Multan, his religious debates with *Gorakhpanthis*, *Qazis* and *Pandits*. This was the starting point of legend formation. -

Most of the *Janamsakhis* have been written in the land of five rivers, which has been a meeting ground for different cultures and civilizations. One of the dominant influences was that of Islam. The *Janamsakhis* have mentioned various *sufis/saints/yogis, vaishnavas* and persons belonging to different denominations with whom Guru Nanak had lengthy discourses. It indicates that these *Sakhis* might have accepted some of their influences and symbols. The biographical works of the Muslim saints viz. *Kashful Majub* by Data Ganj Baksh 'Hassan Ali Hajviri (1009-1230 A.D.), *Tazukra-i-Auliya* by Sheikh Friduddin Attar (1119-1230 A.D.) has been very popular in the Punjab. These were widely circulated at the time of Guru Nanak and even afterwards. These two works abound with miracles which have been described with the lives of Muslim Saints. In the Quran, the miracles of Moses have been described which led Muslims to believe that a miracle on physical plane was an external part of an elevated soul. In this way, we find that the introduction of the supernatural element in the *Janamsakhis* was due, to some extent, to the influence of Muslim biographical religious literature. The supernatural element was the main feature of the medieval religious writings, especially relating to the lives of holy men as we find the miracles in the *vaishnava* literature too.

The life story of Guru Nanak was current among his faithful Sikhs for more than sixty years. These had become part of the memories of the Sikhs. The first impulse which brought about the stories of Guru Nanak, was based on the element of wonder and amazement at his marvellous deeds. When Bhai Gurdas wrote about the founder of Sikhism during the 17th century, he had before him the oral testimonies, legends, and traditions about the Guru, which formed his

earliest source of information. Later on the traditions of Guru Nanak were converted into writing in the following four forms with different names:

1. *Puratan Janamsakhi*
2. *Meharbanwali Janamsakhi*
3. *Bala Janamsakhi*
4. *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*

Different attending circumstances brought variations in these written traditions of Guru Nanak. This point can be illustrated to any length. For details see the Introduction of my book *Janamsakhi Parampara*, published by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969 and 1990.

In the 'Asiatic Researches', John Malcom has significantly written "In every research into general history of mankind, it is of utmost essential importance to know what a nation has to say of itself, and knowledge obtained from such sources has a value independent of its historical utility".³ The traditions of the Sikhs constitute what they have to say about themselves. The Sikh traditions have to be taken into account for writing any aspect of history of the Sikhs.

Instead of indepth study of traditions and legends of Guru Nanak as incorporated in various *Janamsakhis*, Dr W.H. McLeod has rejected *Janamsakhis* as "unreliable sources", since these are not based on the record of Guru Nanak's life. Here, he forgets that the account of prophets, seers and saints can be searched in their traditions which have been recognised as valid sources of information.⁴ On account of this mistake, Dr McLeod has made a number of misstatements which have been discussed in my review on Dr McLeod's "Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion". This has recently been reproduced by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh.⁵ It may not be advisable to divert to that controversial book here.

According to Jan Vasina, the author of "Oral Tradition",⁶ the study of tradition occupies a special place in the various kinds of historical sources. The traditions can be divided into the following categories — narratives, legends, proverbs, historical lays, etc. In pre-literate ages, people had a highly developed power of memory, and handed down their tradition in a suitable form for transmission by use of proverbs like "*Khanda pita laha da, Rehnda Ahmad Shah da*", and folksongs like the one on which Bhai Vir Singh's book *Sundari* has been

based. But, tradition becomes most reliable when it is corroborated by some other evidence. On the whole, tradition is an important source of information. In recent years, particularly in the study of history of African societies, the ethno-historians and anthropologists with historical interest, have demonstrated convincingly how tradition can be recorded, collected, checked and utilized for historical purposes.

In old times, there were specialists whose concern was to memorise and transmit the traditions. In ancient India, the verses of the *Rig Veda* had been preserved in memory from generation to generation till they were brought in the written form. In the Rajput states in medieval India, there used to be bards who recited the important events of the dynastic history of the rulers. In Sikh history, the descendants of Bhattas, whose verses have been included in the *Adi Guru Granth*, have been recording some of the important dates and events relating to the Sikh Gurus.

Just as the tradition of Guru Nanak can be studied in the *Janamsakhis*, the tradition of Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru and Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru can be searched in the *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* and *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasin* respectively, by Sukha Singh and Bir Singh. Baba Sarup Dass Bhalla was the direct descendant of Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru, and he has compiled *Mehma Parkash* in 1776 A.D., basing his account on traditions of Sikh Gurus prevalent in his family. Baba Sumer Singh of Patna, author of *Gur Parkash*, also belonged to this family. Bhai Santokh Singh's celebrated work, *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, is mostly based on the traditions and anecdotes relating to the Sikh Gurus. It can be proved beyond doubt that Bhai Santokh Singh painstakingly collected the traditions of the Gurus. To cite only one example, his account of the travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur is identical with that of *Sakhj Pothi* subsequently discovered by Attar Singh Bhadur and published by Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar. The historicity of traditions cannot be lost in ornate poetry, verbosity of expression and superb imagination of similes and metaphors employed.

One of the important work relating to the eighteenth century history of the Sikhs is *Panth Parkash* by Rattan Singh Bhangu. According to Karm Singh, all the dates mentioned there are correct. I have verified some of its accounts with the Persian sources and found them to be similar, for instance the account of Sikh-Maratha invasion of

Sirhind in 1758 in *Panth Parkash* is identical with that of *Tazakara-i-Imadul-Malik*, a Persian contemporary account.⁷ The entire *Panth Parkash* of Rattan Singh is based on the traditions of the Sikhs. He himself writes at the very outset:

"Now, I write the account of the Sikhs in the way my ancestors have spoken, and also as I have heard from the elderly Sikhs of great qualities".⁸

About the account of martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh, he writes:

"Rattan Singh has written the account after hearing it from his father, who had seen it".⁹

Similarly, some Persian writers of Sikh history have based their accounts on tradition. Dewan Amar Nath writes in *Zafar Namah Ranjit Singh*, "The events narrated by the writer were investigated from the elderly contemporary persons".¹⁰

During recent years, Giani Gian Singh (1822-1921 A.D.), devoted his long life in search of Sikh traditions and preserving them. Before him, there was no book dealing with the complete account of the Sikhs. First, he wrote *Panth Parkash* in 1880 A.D. Subsequently, he visited all the places connected with the Sikh Gurus and collected anecdotes and traditions and compiled *Twarikh-i-Guru Khalsa*, dealing with the lives of the Sikh Gurus. Later on, he wrote *Shamshir Khalsa*, dealing with the Sikh struggle during the 18th century. It was followed by *Raj Khalsa* — giving account of the Sikh states in Cis-Sutlej territory, Ranjit Singh and post-Ranjit Singh period until the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849.

The most important source of information on which Giani Gian Singh relied, was the tradition of Sikhs. He collected his material by undertaking long travels and recording the statements of elderly persons. He had no time to verify, check or analyse the traditions. This work was started by his contemporary Karm Singh, who can be called a pioneer in the field of Sikh history research. His approach to the tradition can be studied from his research monograph *Katak Te Wisakhi*.

Bhai Vir Singh, while writing *Sundri*, *Bijay Singh* and *Satwant Kaur*, has judiciously used folksongs depicting times, anecdotes regarding eminent persons like Kaura Mal (Dewan of Mir Manno) and

anecdotes of the Sikhs in the face of restless persecution. In the preface of *Bijay Singh*, he writes, "Many accounts incorporated in this book have come from elders who are no more... some accounts are taken from folksongs... This book has been prepared by mingling history, traditions and imagination".

In this way, we find that many of the sources of Sikh history are based on traditions, which form the backbone of Sikh history. It may be objective or romantic rendering of history relating to the Sikhs. Just as Bhai Vir Singh has attempted, tradition plays a significant part. No history of Sikhs could be fairly written without taking into account the Sikh traditions. How the traditions could be verified, checked, analysed or interpreted is the job of researchers, an entirely different facet of the problem.

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8. Rattan Singh, "Panth Parkash", "Khalsa Samachar", Amritsar, p. 1.
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SIKH ARCHITECTURE

Narinder Singh

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ARCHITECTURE: Architecture represents not only the art and science of making buildings, but also a way of thinking. There can be no architecture without philosophy, that is, without the structures and operations of intelligence in a material medium. Architecture is both the accumulation and reflection of wisdom about dwelling with others on an inhospitable planet. Architecture accommodates functions of society, of the physical environment, which are designed to achieve the maximum protection from nature's elements with minimum expenditures of efforts and materials. Architecture exhibits a multiplicity of means and divergent modes of achieving unity. Architecture is the silent expression of what the society is.

1.2 SIKH PHILOSOPHY: There is *Akal Purakh* (One Supreme Being). He is truth eternal. He is the creator of all things. Yet He does not remain apart from His creation. Sikh philosophy speaks about *Naam*, a spiritual experience, a vision of cosmic order and its exhortation to higher life.

Sikh philosophy reflects simplicity, clarity, universality, distinctive Sikh identity, resoluteness, inner strength of the Sikh faith, human equality and justice, welfare of all, tolerance, compassion, selfless service, equal access, and openness to different faiths.

1.3 OUTLINE OF SIKH ARCHITECTURE: Sikh architecture is a lively blend of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles prevalent at the time the Golden Temple was built (around 1600). The ribbed domes, flute arches, inlay work, and fresco paintings are attributed to Mughal style architecture, whereas embowed or oriel windows, eaves supported on decorative friezes, *chhatris* (kiosks), cupolas, balconies, *kalasas* (finials) are from Rajput architecture. Sikh architecture is essentially eclectic in nature. It expresses the characteristics of the Sikh spirit, its inviolable freedom and aesthetic

magnificence, in the form of sculptured skyline, variegated wall treatment, disposition of recesses and bold projections. The use of light and water as an element has been frequently exploited in Muslim and Hindu architecture, but it achieved its highest level in Sikh architecture in the Golden Temple. The Golden Temple is an outstanding specimen of Sikh religious architecture. It is in the Golden Temple, that this soul stirring spiritual expression has been realized. The sublime building is divine music, frozen in space and time, which serenely rests in the centre of the pool of nectar like a lotus flower.

The Golden Temple's architectural style formed the basis of Sikh architecture. Various gurdwaras (Sikh churches) across India adopted the Golden Temple-style architecture with minor variations. Apart from religious buildings, Sikh architecture encompasses forts, palaces, *bungas*, *baolis* (stepped wells), museums, libraries, and colleges, etc.

2. THE MORPHOLOGY OF CONCEPTS

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF NAAM: The concept of *Naam* (Will, Word, *Shabad*) is fundamental to the gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) and to the entire structure of its theology. *Naam* sustains all regions and universes, all thought, knowledge and consciousness. *Naam* is the Creator of everything. *Naam* gives form to everything and through *Naam* comes all wisdom or light. In the region of creativity only God's power is at work. In the region of construction, the medium of expression is form; here the most "fantastic" forms are fashioned, including consciousness, perception, mind, intellect. *Naam's* immanence guarantees that the world is a place for righteous activity. The human body is the temple of God. Man is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination.

2.2 THE LANGUAGE OF SYMBOLS: Symbolic forms are sensible perceptibles of the metaphysical reality of things. Even in the Guru Granth Sahib, figures, images and symbols used in poetic expression are accepted in the Indian spiritual tradition. There are two fundamental kinds of symbols: natural and revealed, or general and particular. Natural symbols, such as the processes of nature, form certain systems of order that are symmetrical or rhythmical or both. These are rivers, mountain ranges and plants, etc. Man through art forms, emulates these orders by creating geometric forms which are

symmetrical with respect to the centre *Naam*, and symbolize "unity within unity".

Revealed symbols are particular symbols that have been sanctified by different traditions and vary according to the language and form in which they are revealed. In mathematical symbolism, all numbers and all geometric forms are related to the centre which reflects unity within multiplicity. Man seeks to take symbols back to their origin. Art forms, which have outer as well as inner essences, relate through multiple states in a structure to Unity. This symbolic function can be seen in a dome. Its shape is a container. The dome's unique function is to encompass a hemispherical space leading to a central point. The inherent qualities of the dome represent microcosmic manifestation of the macrocosmic heavenly vault, the sky, symbolizing *Naam's* creation of the universe. In symbols and images, Sikh philosophy reveals symmetry. The total design is expressed through a multiplicity of patterns and textures that manifest that diverse qualities of creation.

2.3 SPACE: Space is one of the most direct symbols of Being. Man knows, that in structured spaces direction is meaningful to him, in this way orientation in space acquires a qualitative aspect. It is only with reference to the heaven that the indefiniteness of space can be given direction. This is demonstrated in sketches of a courtyard, a co-ordinate system, and in the linkage of one space to another.

2.4 SHAPE: Shape results from the demarcation of structured space. Numbers are the units of this spatial definition, and geometry expresses the "personality" of these numbers. Geometric shapes in nature, such as snowflakes, show laws of symmetry, and geometry.

2.5 GEOMETRIC PATTERNS: The geometric patterns concept is based on a symmetry, the correspondence in size, shape, and relative position of parts in the whole. Geometric patterns as spatial concepts require space-filling surface patterns which grow side by side. Space-filling patterns illustrate some variations.

2.6 COLOUR: It is well known that colours have dimensional qualities. Warm colours such as red, orange and yellow are active and advance; cool colours such as green, blue and violet, are passive and recede. Therefore, a series of primary, secondary and tertiary planes, relating to background, patterns, highlight and develop.

3. THE CONCEPT OF TRADITIONAL FORMS

Archetypes of spiritual and celestial qualities are reflected through temporal forms. The dome as a symbolic form conveys its qualitative aspects. Similarly, garden, courtyard, *takht* (throne), gateway, and room are symbolic generic forms, each capable of realization. These generic forms constitute the fundamental building blocks of traditional architecture. Geometric forms allow detailed appraisals of the relative success of past, present and future works.

3.1 GARDEN AND COURTYARD: The architectural conception of the garden and courtyard reflects the "sense of place". It is viewed as a defined space encompassing within itself a total reflection of the cosmos.

3.2 TAKHT (THRONE): The *Takht* recreates the idea of a revered and elevated temporal place.

3.3 PORCH: The porch is space limited vertically by a roof and defined horizontally by points in space.

3.4 GATEWAY: It is an expression in architecture of movement through defined space that occurs over a certain length of time.

3.5 ROOM: The room is demarcated by the six surfaces of the primary co-ordinate system.

3.6 MINARET: The concept of minaret, or tower, is man's most ancient architectural creation, and was a symbol of ancestral pride. Minarets have served as space markers or indicators of orientation. These vertical shapes serve as esoteric landmarks leading to significant places.

3.7 DOME: The idea of the "cosmic house" evolved from dome-like ceilings. Consequently, the terms "cosmic tent", "majestic parasol", "cosmic egg", and "heavenly bowl" convey esoteric meanings associated with the dome. Dome in all its manifestations is the place of the divine throne and sublimely timeless in form.

3.8 CHAHAR TAQ: The place of worship of the sacred fire has existed in Iran since mythical times.

4. METAPHYSICS OF SIKH ARCHITECTURE

Sikh architecture is intimately related to cosmology. The cos-

mos reflects the divine principle and so does man, hence man's intimate relationship to the cosmos. The gurdwara where the *sangat* sits and prays — the abode of the Guru — provides Sikhs peace, harmony and a link with the Creator. Man, the cosmos and sacred architecture depend upon the Divine Cosmology, anthropology, and philosophy of art as many applications of metaphysical principles to various domains. It is in this light that the symbolic and metaphysical significance of the Sikh tradition should be viewed. How Sikh architecture sought to integrate all its features leading to unity is part of the fundamental principle of the Sikh tradition.

Tradition embraces in its totality architectural form, such as space, shape, light, colour, texture, and matter. Sikh architecture should be viewed in its cosmic dimension with all its components. In Sikh architecture space is never divorced from form. Space is qualified by the forms that exist in it. A sacred centre polarizes the space and becomes the terrestrial point on the axis connecting heaven and earth.

Traditional architecture captures space through geometric forms. By symmetrically repeating forms a moving architecture is created that reads like a musical composition.

The qualified space regulates architecture and provides a means to achieve unity and synthesis through multiple facets of life. Orientation of space, its qualitative polarization, and the relation existing between space and form are essential elements of Sikh architecture. Numbers, lines, shapes and colours provide coherent modes of articulation for external expression. It is through providentially revealed forms and spirit of esoteric dimension that tradition lives. Through the use of a minimum vocabulary of materials, colours, and shapes multiplicity has been created in the Golden Temple. Light as a physical element is also considered a symbol of the Supreme Being. Light is a noble form worthy to be the dwelling place of the soul of man, which is none other than Divine Light.

5. TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SIKH ARCHITECTURE

The architectural forms that became the Sikh tradition, are the elements which have been used extensively in the *Harmandir* (Golden Temple) and other gurdwaras. Sikh temples, by and large, are commemorative buildings connected with the Gurus, or places and events of historical significance. Sikh shrines cover a wide spectrum of

structures from the simple and austere to the richly embellished. There are over 500 gurdwaras in India. The form of gurdwaras vary from square, rectangular, and octagonal to the cruciform. Guru Arjun set the precedent in the Harimandar by selecting the simplest geometric forms of a square, cube, and rectangle to demonstrate simplicity and equality.

The dome, generally, is the crowning feature of a gurdwara. The dome usually springs from a floral base and has an inverted lotus symbol-top, from which rises the *kalasa* (an ornate finial). Apart from large central dome, there are often four cupolas, one on each corner. The parapet may be embellished with several turrets or strings of *guldastas* (bouquets), or other similar elements. Minarets, as symbols of royalty, are seldom used in a gurdwara. Pointed, semicircular, elliptical arches, with or without cusps, and ogee arches, are ubiquitous elements of Sikh architecture. The division of the facade into a square with rectangular shapes, as per the requirements of embellishment, are common. Typical features which adorn the parapet, are a multiplicity of *chhatris* (kiosks), or pavilions. There is invariable use of fluted or ribbed domes. Generally, these are covered with brass or copper gilt. There is the frequent use of oriel or embowed windows with shallow elliptical cornices which are supported on carved brackets. All arches are lavishly enriched by means of foliations. The *jaratkari* (in-lay work), *gach* (plaster-of-Paris), *tukri* work (pieces of coloured glass in-laid into *gach*), and fresco-painting, are the techniques used for embellishment of exterior surfaces as well as interior decoration. The military fortifications have their own individuality. There is a multiple use of gateways, a series of battlemented enclosures, and the placement of the structure on top of a strategic point of hill.

6. THE CONCEPT OF COURTYARD

A courtyard is a room without a roof. It has roots both in the cultural context as well as indigenous environments. Climatic conditions make a courtyard necessary for healthy existence in the organization of space. The attached sketches illustrate traditional use of courtyard in both cultural and indigenous environments.

6.1 CULTURAL: The Buddhist *vihara* at Nassick, Moti Masjid mosque at Agra, and a Hindu monastery at Takht-i-Bahai, exhibit cultural traditions of the Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu faiths, respec-

tively.

6.2 INDIGENOUS BUILT ENVIRONMENTS: The plan of Mohanjodaro describes 3,500 year old heritage of people of Punjab. One can observe public squares and numerous courtyards. The block plan of palaces at Fatehpur Sikri; the section and view of *Mahal-i-Khas*, and the idea of sitting under a tree, throw light on the evolution of environmental concepts of semi-hot arid regions. The idea of sitting under a tree, is the concept of achieving natural cooling during the day from the extreme hot temperatures of semi-hot arid regions. This idea received practical shape in *Mahal-i-Khas*, in the form of creating a double height. In the Golden Temple, the theme of double height has been renewed which also provides grandeur.

7. REALIZATION OF SIKH ARCHITECTURE

7.1 DARBAR SAHIB COMPLEX

7.1.1 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The *Darbar Sahib* complex is planned on a courtyard system, an indigenous built element of the semi-hot arid region of the Punjab. There is a large pool of nectar in the courtyard. In the centre of the pool is placed the spiritual jewel, the shrine of *Harimandar*. The immediate surroundings capture the air that is cooled by outgoing radiation. The pool of nectar, a fairly large size for the complex, helps create an eddy from the movement of air currents and produce humidity during the season of extreme dry heat. The dust laden winds are filtered and cooled, thereby achieving air handling through natural application, to create a micro climate. The *Darbar Sahib* complex courtyard fulfills both cultural needs and climatic functions.

The square courtyard of the Golden Temple with the square pool of nectar is not just a public square, it is also the symbol of stability, completion, and a reflection of the cosmos — *sachkhand* (paradise) in its earthly image. The pool of immortality is almost a square measuring 510' x 490' at the top and 490' x 470' at the bottom. The depth of the pool is 17 feet. The pool of nectar unites earth with heaven through the reflection of the sky and stars into the pool.

7.1.2 THE SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE: The Guru Granth Sahib is installed in the centre of the *Harimandar*. *Kirtan* (devotional music) is held without a break for about twenty hours every day. The *Gurbani* (Gurus' compositions) vibrations not only purify the atmos-

phere but are also absorbed by the pool of nectar. A spiritual environment of divine presence prevails within the complex. The moment a devotee steps to the level of the *parkarna* (circumambulation) the first glance of *Darbar Sahib* provides a striking appearance of *Harimandar's* domes and cupolas, amidst the mystifying openness of the complex. The clockwise circumambulation of *Harimandar* gives devotees a profound experience at the fountainhead of their faith and allows them time for contemplation. The prevailing ambience uplifts the devotees to a state of spiritual consciousness, and mystical union with *Akal Purakh*.

7.1.3 THE GENERIC LINK: The Sikh traditional forms, used in the Golden Temple Complex, represent symbols that are derived from the processes of nature. The generic forms identified as linkage of one space to another in botany, pottery, and architecture, have thousands of years of heritage as symbols. Guru Arjun was able to realize them in Sikh architecture. In botany, it is the connection, root, stem and leaf; in pottery it is mouth, neck and body; and in architecture it is connection, transition and culmination. In the Golden Temple, the *Darshani Deohri* (entrance gateway) is the connection; the causeway is the transition; and the culmination is *Harimandar*, the sanctum sanctorum.

7.1.4 THE MOVEMENT SYSTEM: The movement system in the Golden Temple complex is pedestrian. One can enter the complex from west, south, east and north to the *parkarna* surrounding the pool of immortality. To reach *Harimandar*, all must pass through *Darshani Deorhi*. The devotees wash their hands and feet before entering the *Darshani Deorhi*. The pool of immortality ensures that one cannot criss-cross to reach the *Harimandar*, the only way to enter and to leave is through *Darshani Deorhi*.

7.1.5 THE URBAN DESIGN: Sikh architecture has tended to develop into a complex of several buildings serving different functions including offices, museums, residences, libraries, and community kitchen. It also expresses the Sikh work ethics of *kirat karni* (earn a living by one's own labour), *wand chhakna* (share one's income with others), and *Naam Japna* (practice the discipline of *Naam*). The Golden Temple complex demonstrates the urban design character of a public square. The focus is the *Harimandar* shrine. The surrounding buildings do not dominate, and play a complimentary role. The complex performs spiritual, religious, social and cultural functions. The

location of the complex, in the heart of the walled city, is adequately linked to various parts of the city with narrow lanes.

7.2 HARIMANDAR – THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

7.2.1 THE PLAN: The original design of the *Harimandar* was envisaged by Guru Arjun himself. He rejected the traditional styles of Hindu temples having one or two doors. Because of the emphasis on the spiritual aspect, Guru Arjun Dev chose to build a small structure of burnt brick and lime in the centre of the square "pool of nectar" as a shrine rather than as a spacious auditorium. *Harimandar* was destroyed several times by Afghans, and rebuilt with renewed energy. The last construction was in 1765. Guru Arjun's idea has survived to this day.

The main sanctuary of *Harimandar* is a square edifice of 40'.4" x 40'.4", erected on a 66'.4" x 66'.4" square platform in the centre of the square pool of nectar. It is crossed over, on the western side, by a causeway terminating in a double storey entrance gateway. The cubical structure is three storey with an additional two storey building of a half hexagon shape appended to the back. The main building is surmounted by a central dome structure. There are two storeys surmounted by a central dome structure. There are two storeys above the ground floor of the *Harimandar*, and a seventeen foot square opening provides double height to the hall below. There is space around the opening for circumambulation.

7.2.2 THE METAPHYSICAL LINK: The Golden Temple plan, in shape, is a spherical dome resting on a square representing the world of purity. It is an Islamic concept of square and circle. The Muslims borrowed this concept from the Zoroastrians. In plan, it is a mandala (a mystic symbol of the universe), typically in the form of a circle enclosing a square, a symbol of emanation. The dome upon square base is a divine throne, a sign of royalty where Guru Granth Sahib is installed in the centre. It is a form that has no beginning and no end. The dome is not just to cover the walls, it is the image of the vault of the heaven and beyond it of the infinite *Akal Purakh*, of which the sphere or circle is the most direct geometric symbol. Its sole reference point is its centre *Naam*, the eternal Truth, and it is through the vertical metaphysical axis *Mundi*, that the link between the earth and heavens is established. In Sikh traditional architecture, nothing is divorced from meaning, and meaning is none other than spiritual.

7.2.3 REFLECTION OF SIKH PHILOSOPHY: The plan conceived for the Golden Temple was designed to reflect the simplicity and clarity of the Sikh movement. The location of this spiritual jewel in the centre of the pool symbolizes the synthesis of spiritual and temporal realms of human existence. The architectural styles of Muslim and Hindu architecture of that period are incorporated in the sacred shrine of *Harimandar*. Hinduism and Islam were the two dominant religions of India at that time. Their representation in physical form in the sacred shrine gives credence to the universality of the Sikh religion and its openness to all people and all faiths. Hindu temples and mosques are usually constructed on high plinths. Guru Arjun kept the plinth of the Golden Temple at a lower level than the surrounding buildings to emphasize the inner strength and humility provided by the Sikh faith. The Golden Temple provides four entrances, implying that all the people of all four castes have equal access, and that they are all partners in divine instructions. It is also open to different faiths. Many Sikhs participated in building this magnificent edifice. This universal participation took the form of *sewa* (voluntary self-abnegating deeds of service) at the site and a donation to support the construction. This tradition of *sewa* and donation towards the upkeep and building of new gurdwaras has remained unchanged, since the time the Golden Temple was built (between 1588 and 1604).

7.2.4 THE EMBELLISHMENT: The Golden Temple's gilding, marble, mirror, and inlay work are later additions of the nineteenth century during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and reflect the pride, power, and wealth of the Sikh empire.

Both the exterior and interior walls of *Harimandar's* lower storeys are faced with marble panels. These are inlaid with a wide range of exuberant designs and motifs — from geometrics and abstracts to arabesques, and flowers, foliage, fish and animals. Precious coloured stones are used for the inlays, the *gach* and *tukri* work form patterns and textures which embellish the first floor. The upper storeys are surfaced with gilded copper panels with inscriptions and patterns. Many patterns and designs are ornamental, and are rich in texture. For the decorative part, gold, silver, copper and brass have been used. The entrance is composed in bas-relief. A wealth of detail on vaulted ceilings, doors, and archways is quite captivating. The *Darshani Deorhi* is a richly ornamented entrance gateway through which all must pass to reach or leave the causeway to *Harimandar Sahib*. The *Darshani Deorhi*

walls have gilded copper sheets with motifs embossed on them. The massive doors of the entrance gateway are of silver panels with intricate inlays of ivory carving.

8. CONCLUSION

Sikh architecture is the embodiment of simplicity, equality, clarity, unity, symmetry and universality. In the creation of architectural forms, the metaphysical source is *Naam*. The adoption of square and cube, the simplest geometric forms represent the Sikh philosophy of simplicity and equality. Since, the dome symbolizes *Naam*'s creation of the universe, its adoption, as sphere or circle, represents the most direct geometric symbol of *Akal Purakh*. In Sikh architecture, space is never divorced from meaning, and meaning is none other than spiritual. Sikh architecture has created unity through the use of a multiplicity of patterns, textures, and symmetrically repeating forms. The incorporation of Muslim and Hindu architectural elements in *Harimandar* provides credence to the Sikh religion's claim of universality. The use of indigenous built environments of courtyard, and a water-body to create a microclimate are unique elements of Sikh tradition. The carefully planned pedestrian movements provide focus of direction leading to the centre.

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CONTRIBUTION OF SIKH GURUS TO INDIAN MUSICOLOGY

Prof. Sher Singh Sher

Singing, laughing and weeping are the basic truths of humanity, which is scientifically called *Homo sapiens*, meaning 'Man, the wise'. Music is one of the finest products of cultured societies. Not only did the Sikh Gurus love music, but they were also great experts, exponents and patrons of this art, which has magical powers to charm even the wild animals and venomous snakes. The Sikh Gurus devotedly, meticulously and zealously cultivated and continued the ancient system of Indian musicology. All cultural products rooted in the misty and mysterious past have mythical and interesting husks around them. It is necessary, therefore, to say something briefly about the mythical and historical theories of the origin of Indian music before dealing with the contribution of the Sikh Gurus to it.

The technical word for music is *sangeet*, which originally included dancing, drama, vocal and instrumental music. The ancient Hindu *shastras* say that Bharata *rishi* taught this art to *apsaras* or the heavenly bodies who danced before Shiva. The *rishi* Narada taught music to men who sang and played on musical instruments. Thus, the *Gandharva Veda* classified musicians into three categories; the *gandharvas*, the singers; the *apasaras*, the dancers; and the *kinners*, the instrumentalists. The perfect or *shudh* singing of the *ragas* is considered so sacred that according to a legend in the *Abhuta Ramayana*, when *rishi* Narada became proud of his proficiency in all the arts of the world, Vishnu took him to a place where some beings were groaning in pain. On enquiry, they told him that originally they were *ragas* and *raginis*, but the *rishi* Narada sang them so ignorantly that their limbs had been mutilated and separated from their bodies. They added, that without the perfect singing of the *ragas* by Madhva, the originator of music, they could not be restored to their original forms.

According to Indian musicology, there are six basic *ragas*, and they have their numerous wives and children called *raginis* and sub-

ragas. *Sri Raga* originated from the mouth of Shiva, *Basant* from Bamdev's, *Bhairav* from Aghore's, *Pancham* from Tattpurkha's, *Megh* from Isan's, and *Nat Narayan* from that of Parvati. This classification is based on the Shiva School of thought, which is accepted by the Bharata School also. The Hummant School of thought claims *Bhairav* as the Supreme *Raga* instead of *Sri*. According to the Sidhsarsut School, *Basant* is the Seventh *Raga* and they claim the origins of the basic *Ragas* to be from the oceans of salty and sweet waters, milk butter, honey and wine. Indian musicologists have three basic divisions of notes: *Sampuran* of seven notes; in all called *Sa, Rey, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*. Their technical names are *Kharj, Rikhab, Gandhar, Madham, Pancham, Dhaivat* and *Nikhad* and they are further divided into *Vadi, Samvadi* and *Anvadi* which have three phases, *Greh* in the beginning of the song, *Nyas* in the end and *Ansh* repeatedly occurring and dominating the song. The mythology of Indian music ascribes the origin of seven notes to the tones of animals, *Sa* from the peacock, *Re* from the cow calling her calf, *Ga* from the bleat of the goat, *Ma* from the cry of the heron, *Pa* from the cry of the cuckoo, *Dha* from the neigh of the horse, and *Ni* from the trumpeting of the elephant. Historically speaking, the most ancient words set to music are those of the *Rigveda* and the *Samveda*, besides the hymns of the *Zendavesta*, which are also chanted. The Samagha Temples still preserve the tradition of the music of *Samveda*. Music is mentioned in 600 B.C. in *Chhandog Upanishad*. Panini, the immortal grammarian, ascribes the roots of the two sets of the *Sutras* of *Nrit* to two persons, Silalin and Krishashivin. The earliest musical theory on a sound footing is found in the *Rikspratishka* which registers the three voices and seven scales of the *Camut*, and it was the time just before Pythagoras who was working on the musical system of the Greeks. Ravana was also a great musician and according to the *Ramayana*, Laxman heard music from the palace of Sugriva. According to Tirumalaiya Naidu's, 'Music in Ancient India', the *Jatis* of *ragas* have been described in the *Ramayana*, along with many musical instruments including the *vina*, played with a plectrum of *mizarb*.

The *Mahabharata* mentions the *Sewars* and the *Gandhara Grama*. The *Mahajanka Jaikas* of Buddhism also mentions musical instruments, and Brahamdatta's interest in music. The ancient Tamil books, *Putananttu*, and *Pattupaitu*, treat of music and the *Paripaddal* tells about the seven *palai* or seven modes of ancient Dravidian music.

Silappadi Gaaram mentions *yal*, *vina* and flute alongwith some ancient Tamil songs; A Jain lexicon of 300 A.D. gives some very interesting information of southern music of two kinds, complete or heptatonic and incomplete transilient or hexatonic and pentatonic, and twenty-two *srutis* called *matras*. The dramas of Kalidas developed Indian music, and *Malvikagnimitar* is especially interesting. It was the time when Pope Sylvester and St. Ambrose were elaborating the theories of Western music in Europe. Chapter 25th of the *Natyas Sastra* of *Bharatu* describes *svars*, *sruties*, *grams* and *murchhanas* and *jatis*, and a part of this chapter is translated into English by Clement in his Introduction to Indian Music, and into French by Jean Grosset. An ancient inscription in Kudumiyamalai in Tamil Nadu describes *jatis*, *sruties*, *antras* and *kali* to describe the sharpness of *Ga* and *Ni*, the peculiarities of southern music. The theistic and popular sects of Vishnu and Shiva in the sixth and seventh centuries gave a special impetus to music in south India. It was the time when Gregory the Great was developing religious music in Europe.

After saying only this much about the mythical and ancient period of Indian music, I skip over about a thousand years of its evolution and come to a period of the Muslim rule in India during which many musicians developed this art, from Allauddin Khilji to Mohammed Shah, the last Mughal king of India. The Muslim rulers were great patrons of '*Rag-rang*' excepting Aurangzeb, who was the sworn enemy of music. To bring the history of music to modern times the names of some of the greatest musicians can be quoted as: Amir Khusro, Gopal Naik, Lochankavi, Haridas Swami, alongwith his disciple, the doyen of Indian Music, Mian Tan Sen and his *pir*, Baiju Bawra, Pundrika, Vithal, Rama, Amatya, Somnath, Venkatmkhi, Damodar, Ahobala Pandit, Bhavbhuta and his father, Janardhanbhathe, Purandra Vithal, Adaranga and Sadaranga, two brothers of the time of Mohammed Shah, alongwith Shori, the perfecter of the Tappa-style of Hindustani music. In the British period, the art of music was confined to the Courts of the Indian Princes, but still it goes to the credit of the knowledge-seeking propensity and capacity of the western people that William Jones, Sir W. Ousely, Captain Day and Captain Willard, made a commendable study of Indian musicology. *Naghmate-Asafa*, written by Mohammad Raza of Patna, came as a great scholarly work. Maharaja Partap Singh of Jaipur convened a conference of all

the Northern Musicians, and the result was the publication of the famous work, *Sangeet Sar*, or the 'Epitome of Music'. Raja S.M. Tagore, Dr Rabindranath Tagore, and V.N. Bhatkhande did scholarly researches on Indian music which won high applause. The Punjab was the first centre to teach music academically as Vishnu Digambar Paluskar opened a '*Gandharv Mahavidyala*' at Lahore in 1901 which was moved to Bombay in 1908. In short, this is the soil for the birth and growth of Indian musicology which was inherited, cultivated, patronised and preserved by the Sikh Gurus.

As an historical coincidence, the Guru period of the Sikhs exactly synchronised with the Mughal period of Muslim rule in India. It is an interesting paradox in Indian history that the Indian renaissance, called the *Bhakti* movement, emerged parallel with the Mughal tyranny, fanaticism, ferocity and furore against Hinduism and all other patriotic and national forces and institutions. The *Bhakti* movement did a special service to music and some contemporary musician saints could be especially named here, Chaitanya in Bengal, Mira Bai at Udaipur in Rajputana, Surdas in Uttar Pradesh and Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, in the Punjab. The individualistic devotional singing of Mira Bai and Surdas rose to the classical music. The congregational singing of Chaitanya in the forms of *Sankirtan* and *Nagar Kirtan* always remained wrapped in the folk tunes of the devotees amidst the boisterous booming of drums and cymbals. The Sikh Gurus towered above all these saints in maintaining the momentous magnitude of their mirthful and mystic mettle, myrtled in devotional music from the one apostle to the other, and out of the ten Gurus, seven composed hymns setting them to different *ragas*. Three Sikh gurus, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Krishan, did not compose any poetical or musical work. Although all the string, wind and percussion musical instruments are welcome in the Sikh *kirtan*, the Sikh music began with the *rabab*. As history reveals, the *rabab* was improvised by Mian Tan Sen and his disciples had been divided into two groups, *Rabahyars* and *Binkars*. The first played on the *rabab* and the second played on the *veena*.

Guru Nanak's closest friend in childhood, Bhai Mardana, was a Muslim minstrel of the *Mirasi* caste. When Guru Nanak married, he presented him with a *rabab*, which he always carried along with him

and Guru Nanak sang his own hymns to the accomplishment of the *rabab* played by Bhai Mardana. This musical instrument became so closely associated with Bhai Mardana that his descendants are called *rababis* to this day. Guru Granth Sahib is the largest hymnological book of Indian music. Besides the Sikh Gurus, fifteen *bhagats* have also set their hymns to different *ragas* included in Guru Granth Sahib, and in the order of their compilation by Guru Arjun Dev, they are: *Sri Rag, Asa, Majh, Gauri, Gujari, Dev Gandhari, Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhan-sari, Jaitsari, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Soohi, Bilawal, Gaund, Ramkali, Nat Mali Gaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairon, Basant, Sarang, Mulhar, Kandda, Kalyan, Prabhati and Jaijawanti*. These thirty one *ragas* represent all the important times and moods in which the Indian *ragas* are sung. Guru Nanak composed hymns in nineteen *ragas*, Guru Angad in nine, Guru Amar Das in eighteen, Guru Ram Das in thirty, Guru Arjun Dev in thirty, Guru Tegh Bahadur in fifteen and Guru Gobind Singh in six. Here, it should be mentioned that the classical music of northern India is mostly sung in the songs composed in *Brij Bhasha* language, relating to the love exploits of Radha and Krishna, and the text or *bandish* of a *bhajan* mostly consists of two or three lines. The result is that inspite of the best efforts of the musician to pass time and to adorn his art with *alaaps*, the over-repeated recitation of the text and the theme becomes monotonous and boring, whereas the hymns of the Sikh Gurus, on average, contain six to eight lines and their wording and themes are full of variety, inspite of their kernel of devotion to God.

The Sikh Gurus especially loved the string instruments. The *rabab* is associated with Guru Nanak, the *saranda* with Guru Angad and Guru Arjun Dev, and the *dil-ruba* with Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh also patronised the bards called *dhadis* to inspire the audience by the recitation of the epics of the heroes. Guru Nanak used his melodious voice to sing his own hymns in praise of God, and in doing so, he reformed the worst of thieves, thugs, cannibals and religious fanatics, perverts and die-hards during his long journeys within India and abroad. He established regular sittings or *chowkies* or *Hari Kirtan* at Kartarpur Sahib. Later *Harimandar Sahib* at Amritsar and *Keshgarh Sahib* at Anandpur Sahib became the source-centres of the Sikh Gurus, who patronised, encouraged, inspired and highly rewarded musicians, who came to them. From Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, the singing of *Gurbani* or the

hymns of the Sikh Gurus and those of the other saints included in the Sikh scripture, became essential for all the assemblies of the Sikh religion and for all the social or religious ceremonies from birth to death. Many foreigners were deeply impressed, when I told them, on my visits to their countries, that the Sikhs, famous in the world as the sword-bearers of India, and known as the harvest soldiers, are also great lovers of classical music, in which almost the whole of their Scripture is set.

The *Gurbani kirtan* of the Sikhs is such a panacea for them, that even when facing the most terrible and unbearable tragedies, death and other calamities, they seek comfort and joy in the thanks giving and doxological hymns of the *Anand Sahib* in *Rag Ramkali* with the words:

"*Dookh rog santap utrey suni sachi bani*"

(Grief, sickness and torments all banish through listening to the True Word).

Some ancient scholars of Indian music claim that singing and listening to appropriate music cures certain diseases. For instance, dangerous fevers are cured by *Bhairavi*, anaemic diseases by *Basant*, worrying diseases by *Bilawal*, asthma by *Deepak*, tuberculosis by *Ramkali* and despondency by *Kalyan*. *Gurbani* emphasizes this efficiency of devotional music numerous times, and it lays stress on the greatness, necessity, and importance of devotional music, but here to quote decisively only one line of Guru Arjun Dev will suffice:

"*Kaljug mehn kirtan pardhana, Gurmukh jappa lai dhyana.*"

(Music in praise of God is a supreme panacea in this black age of sin, and the true spiritualist concentrates on it).

Although there are basic differences between Indian and western music, yet some westerners have studied Indian musicology in a very scholarly way. Macauliffe has given the notation of all the thirty-one *ragas* of the Guru Granth Sahib in the end of his fifth volume of 'The Sikh Religion', on the accepted lines of western music, so that westerners may understand and appreciate *Gurbani kirtan* sung in its original *ragas*. He did it using the normal western scales, substituting, where necessary, extra flats or sharps. *Sri Rag* is accepted as the supreme *raga* in the Guru Granth Sahib, and in order of compilation, it is the first and a line of a hymn of Guru Amar Das is often quoted

about it:

"*Ragan vich Sri Rag hai je sach dhare piar.*"

(Of all ragas, Sri Rag is the foremost, if one loves truth).

There is the *Rag Mala* in the end of Guru Granth Sahib, which grades *Bhairavi* as the supreme *raga* and begins with the words:

"*Pratham Rag Bhairavi karhi.*"

(The supreme rag is *Rag Bhairavi*).

It is an apocryphal composition and counts six basic or *sam-puran ragas*, their thirty wives and forty eight sons in all counting eighty four *ragas*, whereas there are only thirty one *ragas* in Guru Granth Sahib. It ends saying:

"*Khasat rag un gayey sung raghi tees,*

Sabhi putaragan ke atharah, das beese."

(Six basic and thirty secondary *ragas* combine to produce forty eight minor *ragas*).

Today, the main devotional feature of every gurdwara is *kirtan*. All India Radio is doing a laudable service in preserving the voice of skilful musicians in the original *ragas* as given in Guru Granth Sahib. It is a saddening fact, however, that not only the general lovers of music of northern India, but also a surprising majority of other Indian musicians, do not know what an important and unparalleled wealth of classical hymnology is enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Alas! even sadder is the fact of the lacuna ignored by Sikh musicologists. They have not done internationally countable comparative research on Sikh music or *Gurbani sangeet* to popularise it among the non-Sikh musicologists. Now, some Sikh musicologists are doing some promising pioneering work in this field. Unlike other classical music, in which many ostentatious performers beginning with a sudden thrill to decorate their art, try to build up on the gaudy niceties of music with every word, Sikh devotional music begins with sanctity, which is sustained sweetly, and ends in ambrosial intoxication, instilling rejuvenating elixirs into millions of souls.

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SIKH POLITY

Dr G.S. Dhillon

Sikhism came into being as a consequence of the Divine Will. The Sikh Gurus were ordained to serve as the medium for heralding a new socio-political order, characterised by the values of universal love, equality and justice. They were to express, and enumerate, in simple and poetic accents, the new revolutionary concept aimed at the complete spiritual awakening and regeneration of man. It is in pursuit of this divine mission that, generation after generation, the Sikh endeavour is directed solely to the ascendancy of the Khalsa idea as reflected in the daily chanting of the litany '*Raj Karega Khalsa*' (Khalsa shall rule). Political participation and power are complementary to Sikh religious activity. It is idle to confuse and mislead the public opinion on this point, especially in view of the unambiguous teachings of the Sikh Gurus and the clear lessons of Sikh history. The Sikhs strongly believe that it is not possible for them to practise a full and genuine religious life free from hurdles and hindrances, without a political base of their own.

The Sikh scripture does not give any implicit answers to the question of *modus operandi* of political power. In Sikhism, there is no corpus of civil and political laws of divine sanction, no rigid theories or dogmatic pronouncements on statecraft. Nor do the Sikhs have an ordained priestly class who can rule in accordance with the laws of divine origin or sanction. It is a tribute to the vision and wisdom of the Sikh Gurus that while they laid down basic principles of ethics and morality for the uplift of humanity to be followed by the society and the state, they avoided laying down such specific civil and political rules or treatises as could become restrictive or incongruous in the course of time. In so doing, the Gurus avoided the pitfalls into which some other religions have fallen.

Sikh concepts of society and the state are embedded in the metaphysical and epistemological pronouncements of the Gurus, incorporated in their scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. What is the

nature of this universe? What is the Ultimate Reality? And what is its nature? What is the relation between man and the Ultimate Reality? What is the goal of human life in this world? Answers to these questions provide the basis for the formulations of the concepts of the Sikh state and society. The problem of existence determines the problems of state, society and morals. It involves an understanding of the integrated vision of the Sikh Gurus, their world-view and a value system meant for a corporate society.

Sikhism is a revelatory religion. As such, the message and mission of the Gurus have a direct divine sanction. The Gurus acknowledge no worldly authority, and do not conform to any pre-existing socio-political model. They believe that the true aim of religion is to mould human life in the light of spiritual truth. A religion which does not result in the reshaping of human life is not a true religion; it becomes a dogma, a meaningless ritual.

Sikh paradigms of politics are based on a non-dialectical and non-dualistic metaphysical and epistemological assumption of the Gurus that differ radically from those of other religious systems, which subscribe to a dualistic metaphysics and epistemology. While the latter work in terms of antagonisms, dichotomies and antinomies between spirit and matter, the individual and society, and necessity and freedom, the Sikh thought has always considered such dichotomies as artificial, unreal and unwarranted. The state, as viewed by the Gurus, is linked with the organic whole of human existence.

Dichotomous religious systems, by their very nature, serve to legitimise stark individualism, mindless competition, amoral power-politics, and lead to the dichotomisation of the inner and the outer, ends and means, elite and mass, the chosen and the damned, and heaven and hell. Consequently, there are schisms in the human condition, split personalities, tensions, struggles, contradictions, coercions, confrontations and even wars. By contrast, a holistic and non-dualistic system like the one propounded by Guru Nanak, tends to foster and sustain community co-operation, humanism, world unity and the rupturing of the dichotomies between the elite and the mass, the subject and the object (e.g., man as the maker of history versus man as the product of history), the friend and the enemy, and the ends and the means. Herein lies the import of the Guru's system. Nihar Ranjan Ray

rightly observes, "To be able to achieve the integration of temporal and spiritual seems to me to have been the most significant contribution of Guru Nanak to the totality of the Indian way of life of medieval India. Indeed, he seems to have reared up a new image of socio-religious community given at once to temporal and spiritual pursuits of life".¹ Such a philosophy sustains the concept of a state, not of a religious-communal nature, but of a welfare state with wide ranging obligations. Such a state, directed towards happiness of all, depends on harmony between a comprehensive ethical ideal and practice of power. In a nutshell, the Sikh state is not a theocracy in the narrow sense of the word. It is a religion-oriented state in the sense of exalting the spiritual principle as the basis of political governance.

The Sikh Gurus were conscious that the role of a state in enforcing a particular faith on the people is violative of man's inherent desire for freedom. But, it was their conviction that religion-oriented politics was essential to achieve the ethical ideals of human equality, freedom and justice. This combination can abolish the worst evils of society, and open vistas of peace, progress and harmony. A sound social order can be built and preserved only through moral and ethical imperatives and by abiding values of tolerance, humility, charity and compassion that constitute *Dharma*.

In a society wherein a myriad of gods and goddesses were worshipped, Guru Nanak propounded the concept of monotheism. The idea of a single unitarian God was in a way the Guru's corrective to the polytheism of orthodox Hinduism. According to him, 'It is God's nature to be the fullness of being, all intelligence, all pervasive, omniscient and almighty.' He believed that monotheism supported one universal moral order for humanity, while polytheism viewed truth in fragments, justified sectarian moralities and plurality of virtues. By refuting duality or multiplicity of god-head, Guru Nanak sought to unify mankind through obeisance to an integral, indivisible, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient one God of all the universe and not of any exclusive tribe, race, people, nation, country or region. This brought forward a new nexus of social relationship.

Another corollary of the concept of one eternal Reality is that the two factors of time and eternity are not separated in history. Rather, they interpenetrate each other. Eternity does not transcend time. It is

on the contrary, to be found in time itself. The Sikhs believe that history always conveys some moral lessons. They do not agree with the cyclical view of history propounded by Hinduism, or the significance of the concept of idol-worship and cumbersome ritualism. The Guru said that idol-worshippers and ritualists make idols and rituals the sole focus of their devotion and worship, and neglect the purification of their mind or the self. Those who rely on rituals and ceremonies, do so in the expectation of this-worldly or other-worldly rewards. They are not performed from a sense of duty or in a spirit of detachment, and as such, are a hollow and wasteful means to spiritual ends. The Guru stressed the importance of selfless service, without expectation of reward. This non-utilitarian concept of service was the core of his teaching.

The iconoclastic and monotheistic orientation of the Sikh movement transformed the social outlook of the people. The Guru envisaged an egalitarian social order under the sovereignty of God. He denounced the caste system of the Hindus in vigorous terms. It was in furtherance of the mission of universal brotherhood, transcending the barriers of caste, creed and colour, that Guru Arjun envisioned an all-inclusive integrative polity, based on the principle of democratic collectivism: "All are co-equal partners in this commonwealth with none looked down upon as alien."²

This was in sharp contrast to the Hindu notion of polity in which political power never really shifted from the Brahmins, and socio-political life moved strictly within the manipulated framework of caste system. It is noteworthy, that at a time when the monarchical form of government was the order of the day, and the term democracy was unheard of, human equality constituted the bedrock of the Guru's mission. The Guru threw off the yoke of manipulative priestcraft, and denounced the concept of the chosen few and Brahminic elitism. The Guru advocated equal status to women, and launched a crusade against untouchability. To bridge the artificial gulf between the elite and the lower classes was a mighty task which was determinedly taken up by the revolutionary Sikh movement.

In the life-affirming system of the Gurus, the Ultimate Reality is looked upon as a benevolent and compassionate power which nurtures and sustains this world with loving care. This concept of Reality,

having its essence in love, has many socio-political upshots. Love is the essence of the universe, and consequently, it is also the essential governing principle of human life. This essential principle may not be fully manifest as yet, but it is certainly unfolding itself in space and time. Man's foremost duty is to remove disharmony, discord and hatred, and manifest the essential principle of cosmic governance. Man must love in order to fulfil himself, and he needs love as the basic principle on which to reconstruct life. Love, like the Reality, of which it is the essence, is dynamic. Guru Nanak asserted that in order to play the game of love, one must be ready to undergo hazards and hardships, sacrifices and martyrdom.

When Guru Gobind Singh initiated the Sikhs into Singhs or lions, considering each one of them 'a host of one *lac* and a quarter', he took full cognisance of the essence of Guru Nanak's mission of love — not merely as a system of 'philosophy' but as a discipline. And this mission of love could have no geographical confines. 'Recognise all humankind as one', declared Guru Gobind Singh. This revolutionary and world-fulfilling ideal has taken deep roots in the Sikh ethos. The attributes that are generated in the Sikh community through this ideal such as straight forwardness, fight against injustice, sincerity, honesty, self-reliance, hard work, sense of initiative, etc., are not generally found among other communities.

According to the Gurus, the supreme goal of human life is to become a '*gurmukh*', or God-oriented, to become a fit instrument of the Divine Will, which operates in human history through the deeds of individuals with higher motivations, forming enlightened societies for the purpose. Each individual must train himself for a life of duty, service and social righteousness, in order to become a creative participant in the making of history. It is incumbent on him to play his role towards the creation of a positive corporate culture, of a just socio-political order, which would eventually put an end to all tensions and turmoil. Sikh history reveals that the Sikhs so developed, have placed more exacting demands upon men in public affairs regarding matters involving public at large. This is in sharp contrast to the Hindu cultural ethos with its focus on the individual but lacking the social purpose.

The Gurus stressed that the realisation of God automatically leads to the development of a spiritual outlook on life and spiritualised action in the day-to-day life in consonance with the Will of the Divine.

God consciousness or illumination of soul is essential to foster both social and political enlightenment. Lack of it degrades the moral fibre of the people, narrows their outlook and leads to chaos. The Gurus stressed that life is a spiritual venture and that the world is the Kingdom of God. A Sikh is supposed to live his life in pursuit of this venture — a venture that gives him both an earthly purpose and a spiritual hope.

A noteworthy feature of Sikhism is its emphasis on vigorous and valient action in the temporal sphere. A man of God must be socially and politically committed and equipped to combat the forces of discord, to eradicate evil, to challenge injustice, and to safeguard human rights and values. This is again in consonance with the Gurus' attributes, 'slayer of the evil' and 'helper of the helpless'. Guru Nanak proclaimed that the God he worshipped, was a destroyer of earthly tyrants.³ Socio-political activity in pursuit of righteousness, is nothing less than the execution of His Will. Guru Gobind Singh also spoke of his descent into the world of mundane affairs for the avowed purpose of propagating *Dharam* — the righteous way of life, to exalt the virtuous and to destroy the evil-doers, root and branch. The Guru legitimised the use of force in resisting tyranny and injustice and in defence of the weak and the oppressed. "When all other means have been tried, it is legitimate to take the sword in hand."⁴ The Guru thus gave to his followers the dynamic gospel of supreme fearlessness in pursuit of moral objectives.

The Sikh Gurus looked upon God as the only True Sovereign. As sovereignty is vested in God, He alone is the prime law giver. When the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind raised the *Akal Takht* (the throne of the Immortal), its platform was made higher than the throne of the Mughal rulers of India. This meant that the Sikhs acted in devotion to their Creator. Their foremost allegiance was to God, conscience, righteousness, morality and justice. Human beings should subordinate themselves to the dictates of conscience or the Divine command within them. Nothing good or great can be achieved, unless conscience is stirred up. An earthly ruler can command obedience and allegiance only as long as he realises his primary obligation to carry out God's Will and strive to foster and promote a harmonious social order, based on the canons of morality, justice and the common welfare of all. He cannot command blind obedience, nor can he claim divine right to rule. An unjust ruler who cannot provide the basic human freedoms and

human rights to his subjects, forfeit his right to rule. People have a right to resist his authority to rule. The ninth guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur issued the famous *hukamnama* for an all-out rebellion against the state tyranny calling upon Sikhs 'not to salute a Mughal government official and never to invite him to sit on the head-side of a cot.' The approach of the Gurus was not sectarian. It was free from dogma and religious fanaticism. Guru Gobind Singh looked upon the martyrdom of his father not in terms of the antagonism of the age, but in terms of the polarity of the good and the evil:

The sacrifice he made
for protection of righteousness.
At Tegh Bahadur's departure
the world went into anguished brooding
And the gods exclaimed: Glory to him.

Sikhism attaches great importance to the dignity and freedom of the individual and the sacredness of the human personality. The Gurus want man to emerge in his best and fullest natural stature. Human life is looked upon as God's gift, and not a necessary evil as believed in the earlier religious traditions. Viewed in this context, dualism of God in heaven and man on earth loses meaning. Man is looked upon as a spark of the Divine. As a creation of God, man partakes of the sovereignty of the Divine. This negates the notion of 'original sin', believed to be inherent in human nature. Each individual is entitled to equal opportunities for the full and unfettered flowering of his personality. Guru Gobind Singh's trifacial doctrine — a) individual is the true source of power, b) he must never be enslaved and expended by others and c) prosperity and happiness, in ever-increasing measure, is the birthright and destiny of mankind — left an indelible mark on the Sikh tradition.

The notion of dignity and freedom of the individual is not rooted in egoism or personal salvation. The Gurus stressed that co-operative endeavour of individuals is essential to run social life on the principle of free, harmonious and happy living. Individualism has to be restricted and adjusted to the requirements of corporate existence and social progress. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man can contribute to a healthy, happy and harmonious social order. An enlightened individual is essentially a social being. He sustains the society and the state through

a life of piety, devotion and service to his fellow beings. By realising the Divine within, he provides a divine orientation to human action. Individual moral excellence has to be combined with selfless public service. Guru Nanak laid down three cardinal principles of Sikhism — practice of the Divine Name, earning of livelihood through legitimate and creative effort, and sharing of earnings in a spirit of love and service. Acquisition of wealth is limited by the honesty of means and the imperative to share and to be just. This principle contrasts with other economic systems where the aim is concentration and accumulation of wealth. In Sikhism, violation of obligations towards the community means alienation from the Divine.

In the sublime vision of the Gurus, there is no room for ethical dualities or moral relativism. Since the days of Plato and Aristotle in the European thought culminating in the brilliant exposition of statecraft by Machiavelli, it has been assumed that the principles which govern the conduct of the rulers and inter-state relations are different from those which govern individual conduct. Kautilya's *Arthshastra* — a guide to statecraft and kingship, also looks upon this dichotomy as valid and necessary. Another aspect of Kautilya's state is its attitude towards morals and religion. State, as envisaged in the *Arthshastra*, subordinates moral principles to the necessities of its existence and welfare, and the same attitude is assumed towards religion. It is even made a means of accomplishing political ends. It was not only the morality of the king that could be sacrificed to the exigencies of the states, even the temples of gods and property of guilds could be looted to replenish the treasury.⁵ In fact, Kautilya had no scruples about recommending to the ruler all sorts of deception, perfidy and cruelty.

While professing to outline the practical methods of government, and to achieve unity within the state and dominance over its neighbours, Kautilya advocated treachery, extensive espionage, use of agents, provocateurs, fraud, rumour-mongering, forgeries, poison, torture and ruthless use of force. He saw nothing wrong if the king sometimes had to be untruthful, deceitful or cruel. A ruler, exempt from moral obligations, could tread the most dangerous path and could commit the worst type of political crimes. Such a rule could pave the way for the most uncouth and uncompromising materialism in political life.

Out of the several devices recommended by Kautilya, the use of spies and secret agents deserves special attention. Kautilya assigned considerable importance to them, and indeed thought that their importance was next only to that of ministers. He offered a detailed description of the cunning ways in which they were to be planted in society, and the techniques they were to deploy. They were to go out in such varied disguises as merchants, mendicants, classmates, prisoners and beggars, and were free to use all kinds of treachery, sacrilege, cruelty and immoral devices. The spies reported to the king the activities of his officers, family members, foreigners, courtesans and potential trouble-makers. They also spread false information and created divisions among the subjects. They also spied on the private lives of the citizens and reported on the trends in public opinion and feelings. Magasthenes found these spies so numerous that he discovered them as a special class of Hindu society. They were so pervasive and evoked such terror that they were referred to in a *pallva* inscription as *Samcarantakas* (moving agents of death).⁶ Kautilya also approved of '*matsyanyaya*' or 'the logic of the fish', the moral right of the bigger fish to eat up the smaller one. This connotes that the strong must prey upon the weak in inter-state relations. One cannot help the notion that the legacy of Kautilya is still with our rulers in New Delhi. In order to commemorate Kautilya, free India has chosen to call its diplomatic enclave of New Delhi, Chanakyaपुरी (Chanakya is another name for Kautilya) and name a major road through it *Kautilya Marg*. Hindu leaders have practised deceit, lies and chicanery in dealing with Sikhs.

Sikh ethical norms do not permit cunning and deception either in private or public life. Guru Gobind Singh stressed that in a truly cultured man, intention, profession and deed must harmonise. "He alone is a cultured man, he alone worthy of a human being whose 'yes' is 'yes' and 'no' is 'no'. He who says one thing, and means and intends another, is less than man", said the Guru.⁷ It was his firm conviction that public life should be virtuous. "Unless this principle is accepted and implemented in both the spheres, that is, in the sphere of relations between the rulers and the ruled, and in the sphere of international relations, the emergence of a universal culture, as basis of global fraternity is not possible". He did not sanction use of falsehood in politics. After quitting the fortress of Anandpur Sahib, the Guru, in a letter of admonition to emperor Aurangzeb, wrote:

"You are accustomed to conduct your statecraft through deceitful diplomacy. I approve of naught but that which accords with the principles of ethics and dictates of conscience. Your Imperial Majesty's royal title 'The Ornament of the Throne' does not appear to be literally related to your Majesty's conscience and deeds, for, as we ordinary human beings understand it, deceit and kingly office are not identical concepts."⁸

Godhead in Sikhism is seen as partaking of the spiritual and temporal sovereignties which express themselves in history through the Guru. The Guru was known as *Sacha Patshah* (True King). Hari Ram Gupta writes that Guru Arjun had, in every respect, created a 'state within a state'. But Guru Gobind Singh transferred the spiritual sovereignty (*piri*) vested in him, to the Granth Sahib and the temporal sovereignty (*miri*) to the Khalsa — the God-inspired people. Creation of the Khalsa was an epitomic act. The Guru's aim was to produce the complete and perfect man — learned, wise, agile, religious and refined — in contrast to the cowardly, other-worldly ascetic, who was only concerned with his personal salvation, and was a run-away from life and its manifold socio-political challenges. Such a man, the Khalsa, was to combine in him the virtues of a saint and the strength and sternness of a soldier.

The Khalsa Commonwealth, as it came to be called, was a true democracy of the people. Its constitution was built not on law books but on the Law of Love, the Law of Truth and the Law of Justice. In this constitution, the people, inspired by the natural goodness of humanity, the spontaneous Divinity of God and by the Guru's mystic presence in all beings were made supreme. Its directive principle was the principle of happiness of all. A vital responsibility of the Khalsa was the maintenance of ethical values.

The Guru repudiated the idea of the divine right which made kings supreme in temporal affairs. He explicitly declared, "My spiritual dignity and status is wholly due to the people; otherwise there are countless millions of poor men like me in the world." He said that the victories he achieved on the battlefield were through the grace of the people, that through their help was he enabled to practise charity, that his sufferings and travails were mitigated by the grace of the people, that through their grace was the Guru replenished, that by the grace of the people did the Guru acquire learning and that by their aid were his

enemies destroyed.

The doors of the Khalsa brotherhood were open to all without distinctions of caste and creed. The Khalsa was to be God's agent in the world to ensure justice and righteousness. As an executor of the Divine Will, the Khalsa was not to be afraid of any earthly power. Victory of Khalsa, in pursuit of a righteous cause, was hailed as God's victory, (*Waheguru ji ki Fateh*). Khalsa, thus created, was the visible image of the basic ideas and concepts, inherent in the spiritual thesis of Guru Nanak. The very conception of the Khalsa embodied the ideal norm towards which the entire Sikh historical process had been directed. The Khalsa, as a collective entity became the custodian of Sikh thought and tradition.

Apart from being an egalitarian social order, the Sikh movement was a plebian political revolution as well, but the pressure of circumstances prevented it from assuming spectacular dimensions. The institutions of '*Sarbat Khalsa*' and '*gurmatta*' shaped the destiny of the Sikhs during their ascent to political power in the eighteenth century. The *Sarbat Khalsa* institution represented the unified corporate personality of the Khalsa, while *gurmatta* signified taking decisions in the name of the Guru. Before and after the battles, the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, performed ablutions in the sacred tank and passed regular *gurmattas*. In 1764, on the eve of Ahmad Shah Abdali's last raid, the Sikhs passed a *gurmatta* proclaiming the independence of the Sikh state. The Sikh gurdwaras were the centres of free thought and the integrated Sikh activities.

The first bid for establishing the Khalsa rule was made by Banda Singh Bahadur, when he defeated Wazir Khan, the Mughal Governor of Sirhind in May, 1710. He established a sovereign rule over the conquered territories with Lohgarh as the Sikh capital. He attributed his political success to the grace of the gurus, Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, and the sovereign power was said to have been derived ultimately from God. He did not assume kingship for himself. He struck coins in the name of the Guru and wielded power in the name of the Khalsa. One of the greatest humanitarian works done by Banda was the distribution of land among the poorest tillers. Guru Gobind Singh had enjoined on Banda 'to remain pure in conduct and never to touch another man's wife; to be true in word and deed; to look upon himself as a servant of the Khalsa, who would be the Guru in future,

and to act always on the advice of the five (representative) Sikhs.'⁹ Banda's spell of sovereignty was too brief for the full flowering of the Khalsa rule under him.

After Banda, the Sikhs had to face intense persecution, pogroms and systematic genocide campaigns of the Mughal and Afghan tyrants. A noteworthy feature of the Sikh struggle was the maintainance of ethical standards during their militant programmes. Even an enemy chronicler Qazi Nur Muhammad, in a Persian manuscript '*Jangnameh*' (1765), praised the Sikhs for their war ethics and practices. He bore testimony to the fact that the 'Sikhs never kill in battle those who lay down arms or otherwise refuse to resist and fight.' Something which was in glaring contrast to the victorious armies of all times, including the armies of the civilised world of the 20th century, was the attitude of the Sikh soldiers towards women, who according to the Qazi were never molested or robbed by them. The Qazi observed, "Leaving aside their mode of fighting people, in no case would they slay a coward or put any obstacle in the way of the fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or a maid-servant. There is no adulterer amongst them, nor are they given to thieving. Whether a woman is young or old, they call her a '*budhiya*' (an old lady), and ask her to get out of the way."¹⁰

There is ample evidence in history that the Mughals tortured the Sikhs whenever they fell into their hands, with the cruelest available methods. But, the Sikhs observed ethical restraint and did not resort to these methods. Even in retaliation, they tried to follow the injunction laid down by the Guru: 'Exercise forbearance in the midst of power; be humble in the midst of honour.' When Sikh *Misldars* (12 in number) became masters of Punjab in 1765, they presented a fine example of Khalsa rule. In the words of Gardon, "These *Sardars* did not exercise absolute supremacy over their *Misls*, the constitution of which was very democratic and the authority of the chiefs limited."¹¹ Another observer, Forster noted, "I find an embarrassment in applying a distinct term to the form of the Sikh government, which on the first view bears an appearance of aristocracy, but a closer examination discovers a larger view of popular power branching through many of its parts. No honorary or titular distinction is conferred on any member of the state..... An equality of rank is maintained in their civil society which no class of men, however wealthy or powerful, is sufficient to break

down. At the period when general councils of the nation were convened, which consisted of the army at large, every member had the privilege of delivering his opinion and the majority, it is said, decided on the subject in debate."¹²

Themselves victims of the worst kind of religious tyranny, these Sikh chiefs established a just and humane rule. They treated the Muslims very generously and made no distinctions among their subjects on the grounds of caste and religion. In times of distress, they helped Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike. In 1783, when Punjab was stricken with a severe famine, the Sikh chiefs opened '*langars*' (free kitchens) to feed the needy. A report quoted in the Montgomery District Gazetteer speaking about a Sikh chief of the area says, "The famine of A.D. 1783 occurred in Budh Singh's time. He is said to have sold all his property and to have fed the people with grain from the proceeds."

A mention must be made of Nawab Kapur Singh, who led the Sikhs through the most trying times, and whose personality radiated in full measure, all the sublime values of Sikhism. In the midst of his life-long pre-occupation with war and fighting, he maintained such irreproachable moral standards, as evoked admiration even from the enemies. Sikhism has been a catholic faith since its birth. It is noteworthy that this aspect of its character was not affected by the cruelties inflicted by the Mughal state on the Gurus and the freedom fighters of the eighteenth century.

The Sikh rule under Ranjit Singh was a characteristic product of the Sikh tradition. Ranjit Singh's polity could not be called a theocracy in the narrow sense of the word. But, he built his rule on religious foundations and referred to his government as *Sarkar-i-Khalsa*, which derived its legitimacy from the Khalsa or the Commonwealth — the mystic entity in which resided all sovereign power pertaining to the community. In *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* that Ranjit Singh established, he did not proclaim Sikhism to be the state religion, nor did he rule in the interest of the community to which he belonged. As Vincent Smith noted, he did not establish a dictatorship of one community over another. His state was a co-operative commonwealth, in which there was an element of partnership with other communities. This was fully in consonance with the principle of peaceful co-existence propounded by the Sikh Gurus. It was no mean achievement of Ranjit Singh to unite

the three principal communities — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in a common enterprise, and reconcile them to the new political order through genuine and heart-felt tolerance and large-hearted liberalism, which had its roots in the Sikh ethos.

In the old institution of monarchy, there was a primacy of personal and family ambitions over the requirements of public interests. But, in the case of the Khalsa kingdom, the ideals and duties of the ruler were to serve the people in a spirit of self-dedication. His office and power were a sacred trust to be used for the well-being of the people and not of his own. Ranjit Singh held fast to the values of justice, freedom and human dignity, not through any defined statements or religious vows or policy pronouncements, but through stark deeds.

His rule was founded on the willing co-operation and goodwill of his people. When he conquered the Muslims, he strove to blot out all traces of bitterness and animosity born of conquest which might rankle in their hearts. Vindictiveness was unknown to him. He had no rancour against his Muslim predecessors who had been responsible for the persecution of the Sikh Gurus and some of whom had unleashed a reign of terror against Sikhs. All his vanquished subjects were well provided for and not left to rot in a state of penury or desperation. His conquests transformed the conqueror and the conquered alike, each of whom readily contributing his best to the common weal.

Ranjit Singh's rule was characterised by scrupulous observance of rare norms of public conduct and social ethics. When the victorious Khalsa army passed through the streets of Peshawar, he issued strict instructions to his *Sardars* to observe ethical restraint in keeping with the Sikh tradition, not to damage any mosque, not to insult any woman, and not to destroy any crops. He tried his best to follow the Guru's injunction: 'Exercise forbearance in the midst of power, be humble in the midst of honour'. He attributed every success to the favour of God. He was modest, humane and humble. Royal emblems of crown or throne were conspicuous by their absence in his *Darbar*. When he issued the coins of his empire, he struck them not in his own name, but in the name of the Guru. The rupee and paise were called *nanakshahi*. The inscription on them in Persian meant: "Kettle: Symbol of the pot from which the poor were fed. Sword: Symbol of power to protect the meek and the helpless, and victory and unhesitating

patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh."

Ranjit Singh gave complete freedom of expression and worship to all his subjects. He did not treat the Sikhs as a privileged class, nor did he place any disabilities on his non-Sikh subjects. His contemporary rulers, the Peshwas, could not be free from the shackles of casteism and Brahminical chauvinism. It goes to Ranjit Singh's credit that his policy was free from bigotry or racial arrogance inherent in the caste-ridden system of Hinduism. All posts in his state were open to talent and merit. He gave the highest positions such as prime-minister-ship, foreign ministership, etc., to members of the other communities. Some of his closest advisers were Muslims. It is a proof of the loyalty he inspired that during the Anglo-Sikh wars, the Muslim forces fought as valiantly as the Sikhs. For the first time in the Indian history, a landmark was created. *Mazhabis*, the centuries old untouchables of the Hindu society, far from being discriminated against, became a regular component of Ranjit Singh's army.

The catholicity of the Sikh tradition left its visible impact on the outlook and policy of Ranjit Singh. Religious bigotry, he knew, was incompatible with Sikhism. He daily listened to the readings from the Sikh scripture. The ideas of unity of God, universal brotherhood and welfare of all (*Sarbat da Bhala*), which sum the basic tenets of Sikhism, were deeply embedded in his psyche. This enabled him to look far beyond the narrow horizons of creed and restore complete religious harmony in his kingdom. He respected the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus and the Muslims, and did all he could do to win their love and loyalty. To bring about emotional integration in the kingdom, important festivals of all communities were jointly and officially celebrated. Cow slaughter was banned throughout the empire in deference to the wishes of the Hindu subjects.

During his rule, there were no outbursts of communal fanaticism, no forced conversions, no attempts at bloody revenge, no language tensions, no second class citizens, no repression, no bloodshed, no executions and no tortures. There was no capital punishment which even the modern democracies have not been able to abolish. It was not awarded even when there was an attempt on the life of the Maharaja himself. During his reign of 40 years, he did not sentence even one person to death.

Ranjit Singh issued no Infallibility Decree. The idea of divine right of kings, which connotes divine absolutism, had no appeal for him. He kept himself open to correction. In a '*Furman*' addressed to the Chief *Kotwal* of Lahore, Fakir Nur-ud-din, in 1825, it was stated: "If even His Highness himself or any other member of his family should issue an inappropriate order against any resident of Lahore, it should be brought to his notice, so that it may be amended." It was a unique instance where the king had claimed equality with his subjects.

In another '*Furman*' issued to Nur-ud-din, he sent the following directions: "You should send your trusted representatives to the *Sardars* to refrain from committing inappropriate acts. If the *Sardars* act according to your instructions, well and good, otherwise you should send words to them that you will bring the matter to the notice of His Highness. Moreover, you should not permit forcible possession to be taken of any person's land, or any person's house to be demolished. Nor should you allow any high-handedness to be practised upon wood-cutters, fodder-vendors, oil-vendors, horse-shoers, factory-owners, etc. In such cases also you should prevent the oppressor from oppression." Fakir Waheeduddin observed that these "orders are unique in one respect: they throw overboard the time-honoured legal fiction upon which the fact of kingship is based — that the king can do no wrong". It was characteristic of Ranjit Singh to acknowledge that, both as a man and as a king, he was fallible, and to provide against any possible adverse effects of his fallibility upon the rights and well-being of his people.

Ranjit Singh, in obedience to the will of 'the sovereignty vested in the *sangat*' obeyed the *gurmatta* (decision taken in the name of the Guru). On one occasion, when the *Akal Takht* — the supreme temporal authority of the Sikhs took exception to a moral lapse on the part of the Maharaja, he humbly bared his back and submitted to the dictates of the *sangat* for receiving public flogging as chastisement for his un-Sikh like act. This obedience of the king to the people was from the example of the Guru himself. The Khalsa's was a truly representative monarchy, the soul of a people gathered in one man. Ranjit Singh was both a king and a comrade of the people in the true sense of the word.

The habitual meekness of spirit which the Maharaja displayed even at the peak of his glory, the sympathy which he had for the fallen

foes, and the compassion he had for criminals demonstrated the breadth of his vision and the catholicity of his temper. On one occasion, he is said to have punished one of his generals for killing a *koel* (nightingale) when she was warbling. No body was allowed to hurt a swan, a parrot or a sparrow.

The economy of the state rested on even keels. One tenth of the state revenue, amounting to nearly Rs. 20 lakhs a year, was given away in charity. No faith lay outside the bounds of his charity. This was in compliance with the Fifth Guru's directive to the Sikhs to contribute '*daswandh*' (one tenth) of their earnings towards charitable causes.

The cases of bribery and corruption in his kingdom were rare. The Maharaja's frequent and unexpected tours kept the local officials in check. While crime had been rampant under his immediate predecessor, it was reduced practically to the point of abolition during his reign. The cases of theft and highway robberies were rare. George Keene, a contemporary observer of the Punjab scene stated, "In hundreds and in thousands, the orderly crowds stream on. Not a bough is broken from a way side tree, not a rude remark addressed to the traveller as he treads his horse's way." As a result, many people from the Satluj states migrated to the Maharaja's territories where there was more security for life and property, where their rights and privileges were better protected. The Maharaja provided to his subjects all the fundamental rights and basic freedoms supposed to be enshrined in any modern constitution of today. Jawahar Lal Nehru, in his "Discovery of India" observes, "Ranjit Singh was remarkable humane at a time when India and the world seethed with callousness and inhumanity. He built up a Kingdom and a powerful army, and yet he disliked bloodshed. He abolished the death sentence for every crime, however heinous it might be, when in England even petty pilferers had to face death."

The Maharaja gave to his citizens a consistent and uniform system of administration and a greater amount of peace and prosperity than they had enjoyed for over a century. The Mughal and the Maratha rules in the country had been marked by bigotry, corruption, degradation, persecution, treachery, confusion, disorder, extravagance and pomp. Ranjit Singh's claim to greatness lies in the fact that he successfully faced the historical challenges of abuse of power and religious bigotry by restoring communal harmony in his state. He endowed

politics with a moral purpose. "The Maharaja was" wrote Gardner, "indeed one of those master minds, which only require opportunity to change the face of the Punjab. The Punjab was not the same, semi-starving, terrified, looted by the rulers and poorly clothed during his reign. It was a prosperous, homogeneous and peaceful state with all the communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, fully satisfied, partners in the government, in military and civil administration, and it was the happiest state communally in Asia. The Maharaja visited the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim places of pilgrimage. It was the only state in India, which was the most prosperous, the most flourishing and most contented." His state was governed and sustained by values and attitudes that characterised the liberal Sikh tradition. The Gurus had envisioned an egalitarian social order based on justice and freedom. With the Sikh ethos in his psyche, Ranjit Singh translated this vision into practice.

In free India, there is a need to comprehend and understand Sikhism and Sikh ethos at a systematic, profound and dispassionate level. Sikhism is unique among the world religions. A dominant note of Sikhism is respect for all creeds. As a religious scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib* is of immense value, as it places before mankind a very dynamic philosophy of life. It provides great visions of truth and insight into the fundamental meaning and purpose of human life. It stands for a faith which is meant for all humanity, without any distinction of race or creed, and without any limits of time and space. Such is the spirit of universality stressed by the Sikh Gurus.

Guru Nanak, with his emphasis on the unity of God and universal brotherhood, was the herald of a world society. He propagated universal ethical norms for the redemption of mankind and pointed the way to the solution of the larger problem of international culture. By doing so, he became the precursor and prophet of the coming humanity.

Today, the most urgent problem faced by mankind is to find the right political order, to put an end to the atmosphere of anarchy, tension, spiritual impoverishment and breakdown of positive values. The spiritual poverty of man has advanced at a rate commensurate with his scientific and technological wealth. As he has progressed in science, he has regressed in ethics and spirituality, so that he lacks the moral capacity required to make proper use of his newly acquired knowledge.

Western civilisation is based on the principle of separation of religion and state. As such, the social, economic, political and technological questions of human civilisations are grappled without any reference to God and His guidance. God may be worshipped in one's personal life. Nonetheless, the affairs of society and the economy are to be conducted according to man's own discretion and sovereign wisdom. The conquest of nature has become the main target of human effort. The stream of civilisation, however, seems to run its course without reference to the values and principles communicated to mankind by God through His prophets. The Western model of polity has given rise to gross materialism, elitism, centralisation, militarism, concentration of wealth, glaring inequalities, exploitation of man by man and alienation of the common man from the system.

Guru's sublime gospel of love, tolerance and universal benevolence can provide the most effective solution to the problems confronted by mankind at this grave juncture in history. In the just social order of the Guru's vision, the spiritual and material aspects of life are welded together, with the result that progress and prayer do not represent two watertight compartments but two sides of the same coin with prayer acting as a stepping stone to human progress, and progress leading further to the glorification of the Creator.

Sikhism is not a religion in the limited sense of the word, interested only in man's salvation in the life to come. It is a complete way of life and aims at structuring the entire fabric of human life and culture in the light of values and principles revealed by God, for its problems are approached in the light of moral values and social ideals that Sikhism expounds. The purely positivistic vision of social sciences developed in the West becomes obsolete in this context. In Sikhism, man is treated as a human being, possessing a moral personality and not just a complex of molecules. The world has suffered from the folly of social science, with the result that technocratic solutions are being imposed on society in the name of science, often legitimising the status quo, to the neglect of all moral and ideological options available for social policy.

Sikh history and heritage reveal that ethos has been in tune with the teachings of their Gurus. The Sikh history is a history of martyrdoms and sacrifices in order to uphold certain fundamental and abiding values of human life. Sikhs have fought and laid down their lives

for universal causes, for *Dharma* (righteousness) that is permanent, unalterable and valid for all times.

Indian polity has failed the Sikhs. Political ethos of free India has been narrow and parochial in its approach. In the current socio-political milieu, Sikh traditions, values, culture and identity are seriously threatened. The Sikhs are sorely grieved at this grave phenomenon, and they cannot accept the situation as a *fait accompli*. Placed in a predicament where their trauma evokes no concern from any quarter, they seek an autonomous political set-up where they can salvage their socio-political identity, and where they can grow to their true and natural stature, according to their inherent genius.

The robust and virile Sikhs visualise a land of freedom, equality and justice, a land of men and women with faith in God and faith in man, where human personality is not suppressed but respected, where divinity in man is not obscured, where spiritual and moral values are duly recognised and the individual is accorded as ultimate intrinsic worth.

The Sikhs are fully conscious that the Guru's vision of establishing the kingdom of God on this earth cannot be fulfilled in the true sense in a circumscribed geographical area. They know that the consummation of Guru Nanak's vision would eventually be a world state, based on the principle of equality, fraternity, justice and peaceful co-existence. For this purpose, they have to keep their ideological base intact. They cannot allow it to be eroded. In the given circumstance, the immediate and the most urgent problem facing the Sikhs is that of safeguarding their socio-political existence through fundamental political arrangements or accept gradual and ignominious death. A necessary corollary of the Sikh way of life, which accepts plural societies, is that in the proposed Sikh state, power will not be used to the detriment of the non-Sikh population. It is intended to serve as a model for the rest of India and the world.

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SIKH SITUATION TODAY

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Lt. Col. Partap Singh

In this review, I shall not delve into the early, though most glorious periods of Sikh history, viz., the Guru era, the emergence of Sikh power in the north of India during the time of Banda Singh Bahadur, the subsequent horrific persecution of Sikhs, domination of the *mists* right upto river Ganga and the Sikh Raj under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Annexation of Punjab by the inferior British India forces was a consequence of the treachery of the U.P. *Brahmins* and *Dogra*s, who occupied the top ministerial and army positions, besides the infighting among the Sikh *sardars*. The latter trait exhibits its ugly features even now. The alien rulers were generous in their praise of the fallen foe and went out of their way to rehabilitate officers and men in the reorganised Indian army as well as on land irrigated by canals, and providing other facilities. Yet, many self respecting Sikh leaders raised the banner of revolt. Baba Ram Singh, Bhai Maharaj Singh, the Ghadri Babas are outstanding examples. These leaders and their followers were almost entirely Sikhs.

FREEDOM STRUGGLE

It is common knowledge that the Sikhs were in the vanguard of the freedom struggle. By comparison, their sacrifices in liberating India were phenomenally more than those of other communities. For instance, the Sikh population at the time of Partition, in undivided India, was merely 1.6%. Yet, 77.5% who were extrajudicially killed, viz., in the Kuka movement and Jallian Wala Bagh, judicially hanged, exiled (Roll of martyrs listed in the Cellular Jail in Andamans bears testimony) and those sentenced to life imprisonment were Sikhs. It is also noteworthy that 60% of the Indian National Army, founded by General Mohan Singh and later consolidated and led by Neta Jee Subhash Chandra Bose, were Sikhs.

The sacrifices and privations suffered by the Sikhs were not for their personal freedom or re-establishment of their lost empire, but for the whole subcontinent. The Sikhs were the only people who fought tooth and nail against partition of the country. It will be recalled that Master Tara Singh chopped off the Muslim League Flag with his sword on the 14th March, 1947, at Lahore, and denounced the creation of Pakistan in the toughest language like '*Pakistan Murdabad*' (Death to Pakistan).

The Sikhs rejected most favourable terms offered by M.A. Jinnah for an option to remain in Pakistan. Briefly, the terms offered were: Sikhs would, *inter alia*, have full autonomy east of the river Ravi, which would have meant that the eastern border of Pakistan, skirting Delhi but going well beyond it; 40% enrolment in the Defence Services and 20% in the Civil Services — far in excess of their population ratio — and that no legislation would be passed, unless it was acceptable to the Sikhs.

During the parleys for transfer of power from the British to the Indians, the Sikhs were among the three nations besides Hindus and Muslims; not because they were the third largest community in India — Christians were nearly double their number — but for a variety of other cogent factors. At that time, there were two schools of thought: One, to have a separate independent Sikh state and, two, to join India. The British people, their Parliament and Cabinet had full sympathy for the Sikhs. They wanted to make constitutional arrangement to safeguard their political, social, economic and religious interests. But, there was no sizeable area where the Sikhs had majority, save for two *tehsile*, Patti and Dhuri. Taking this argument further, it would be remembered that the Jews got Israel in Palestine where their population was only 10%! Unfortunately, the Sikh leaders failed to capitalise on such precedents. Vast majority of Hindus and almost 100% Sikhs had to leave their hearths and homes, and move out of West Pakistan. Likewise, almost all the Muslims except those residing in the princely state of Malerkotla (and we all know the reason why) had to leave the East Punjab. Large number of Muslims also moved out of the Northern provinces, particularly from the U.P. A majority of the Sikhs resettled themselves in the areas comprising the present Punjab, its neighbouring states, Delhi and some other cities in the hinterland. Had the then leadership realised that there was going to be wholesale migration, and

what they were going to be in for, a very viable independent Sikh Homeland would have been a reality.

In the circumstances, Sikhs joined India for the following reasons:

1. Historically, majority of the Sikhs were converts from Hindus. There was intermarriage between the two communities, they broke bread together, and gurdwaras, in particular in the North West, were the common places of worship. Some vested interests, out of design or ignorance, took that Guru Nanak was a Hindu and, therefore, propagated that Sikhs were part and parcel of Hindus. Well, he was as much a Hindu as Christ was a Jew, who was born in a Jewish family and, as a corollary, Christians should be considered synonymous with Jews! I hope this simile will deliver a *coup-de-grace* to this ongoing concoction.
2. During the freedom struggle and in recognition of Sikh contributions, the Hindu and Congress leaders made some solemn commitments to the Sikhs. The Congress party, in its annual session at Lahore in 1929, passed a resolution that on achieving independence, no constitution would be framed unless it was acceptable to Sikhs. Later, Mahatma Gandhi assured them with an unambiguous declaration: "I ask you to accept my word and the Resolution of the Congress that it will not betray a single individual, much less a community. Let God be the witness of the bond that binds me and the Congress with you." He further added, "Sikhs would be justified in drawing their swords out of the scabbards as (Guru) Gobind Singh had asked them to, if the Congress would resile from its commitments" Jawahar Lal Nehru announced publically the commitment of the Congress for the creation of an autonomous Sikh State, albeit within the Indian Union. He said; "The brave Sikhs are entitled to an area and set up in the North, where they can also experience the glow of freedom." The constitution framed was so inimical to the Sikh interests that their representatives refused to append their signatures to that document in protest.
3. There are numerous examples where Sikhs willingly suffered for justice and equality for all groups and communities. During the Gurdwara Reform Movement, also known as the Akali Movement (1919-24), they demonstrated practically the concept and ideology of non-violence which was to become Mahatma Gandhi's creed for

India's liberation. *Jatha* after *jatha* would sally forth daily only to be killed and maimed, without offering any resistance. The Indian leadership applauded their bravery in the most glowing words. It impelled Gandhi to record his appreciation through a telegram to Baba Kharak Singh; "First battle for freedom won. Congratulations!" Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya went to the extent of advising Hindus to convert one member from each family to Sikhism. Sikhs came to be known as the sword arm and saviours of Hindustan.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDIA'S PARTITION

Having failed to prevent partitions against which they fought till the last, and for which Congress was no less to blame than the Muslim league, the Sikhs joined India resulting in 50% of their population being dislocated from the lands of the fertile irrigation colonies in West Punjab and lucrative business spread all over the territory, which was to become West Pakistan. They believed that the Congress had a deep and abiding faith in democracy and that it would, as promised, provide special safeguards for the minorities. Further, the Congress party was committed to the Cabinet Plan which laid down, *inter alia*, that all powers and subjects except Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, would be in the domain of the states. It was an echo of the 17th Dec., 1925 Bill introduced in the House of Commons for a politically decentralized Federal India. Provinces were to be designated *rashtras*, meaning nations, i.e., the ruling entities with residual powers delegated to the Centre as stated.

I have mentioned that the Congress Party was to share equally the blame for vivisection of India. Sample what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who had the longest tenure as President of the Party in the forties, states in his book, 'India Wins Freedom'; "Jawahar Lal Nehru's obsession to become India's first Prime Minister was primarily responsible for the partition". After the visit of the Cabinet Mission in March, 1946 and its report to the British Cabinet, the then Prime Minister Attlee made an announcement in the House of Commons on May 16, ensuring the unity and integrity of India.

Both the Congress and the league accepted the plan. The Congress had passed resolutions both in the executive committee and the general house to give effect thereto. Mr. Azad painfully recorded: "Then happened one of those unfortunate events which changed the

course of history. On 10th July, Jawahar Lal held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement. Some press representatives asked him whether, with the passing of resolution by the A.I.C.C., the Congress had accepted the plan in toto, including the composition of the interim government. Jawahar Lal in reply stated that, the Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly 'Completely unfettered by agreement and free to meet all situations as they arise...' Jawahar Lal's statement came to Jinnah as a bombshell... The Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in Delhi, as it was assured that the Congress had accepted the scheme and the Plan would be the basis of the future Constitution of India. Now that the Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the Assembly, this would mean that the minorities would be placed at the mercy of the majority". Subsequently, the Muslim League Council met at Bombay and after three days of deliberations (27- 29 July), "passed a resolution rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan. It also decided to resort to direct action for the achievement of Pakistan". The Maulana wrote that the biggest political blunder of his career was to propose the name of Nehru for President of the Congress party.

This digression from the subject has a relevance because it highlights the character of the man who was the principal actor in breaking up the country and resiling from his pledges. Whereas the Muslim leaders could see the writing on the wall, the Sikhs in their simplicity, a characteristic of brave people, took no concerted steps to ensure that their interests would be protected by the Congress leadership, who could go back on the recently passed unanimous resolution when the British were still in India. What guarantee was there that after independence, the promises made to them would be honoured? Let me jump ahead and take this tale to its logical conclusion.

Soon after partition, when the Sikh leaders met Nehru to remind him to honour the promises made to them, he brushed them aside saying that "the circumstances have changed". The strongman of India, Sardar Patel was equally forthright telling them that "the Sikhs have missed the bus." What these two machiavellian worthies meant in effect was, that the Sikhs were foolish to trust them and the Congress to abide by their commitments! Later, Indira Gandhi also held a dozen bilateral and tripartite meetings, in some of which leaders of the other national parties had participated. During three such meetings, solu-

tions to the so called Punjab problem were threshed out and finalised, only to be sabotaged by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, at the last moment. Likewise, her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, announced at Chandigarh that Sant Jarnail Singh was a holy man without any political ambition, and that there was no question of using the Army to storm *Harimandar Sahib*. That was barely a month before the Operation Bluestar was launched, preparation for which had been going on for a whole year.

Reverting to the Partition, some additional points deserve to be discussed. When the Sikhs failed to prevent it, they agitated for division of the Punjab province, which as a whole was a Muslim majority area and would have gone to Pakistan. The British Government consequently decided to bifurcate the province into segments, so that the Muslim majority districts could go to Pakistan, and the Hindu and the Sikh majority districts to India. The only exception was the Gurdaspur District, in which Muslims had a marginal majority. Lord Louis Mountbatten, who had by then succeeded Field Marshal Wavell as Viceroy of India, obliged the latter by retaining river Ravi as a natural boundary by giving only the Shakargarh *tehsil* to Pakistan and the remainder to India. It is also noteworthy that there was no serious protest in the case of Bengal which, too, was a Muslim majority province. By applying the Punjab model, it, too, was divided between India and Pakistan. This act of the Sikhs resulted in tremendous advantage to India vis-a-vis Pakistan. Jinnah complained to Wavell that Pakistan minus two fifths of Punjab and West Bengal was 'A Husk'.

The second important feature was the impetuosity and over confidence of the flamboyant Mountbatten. His mandate was to transfer the Power to the Indians by June 24, 1948. But, despite his exceptional qualities as a statesman and a war lord, he advanced the date to Aug. 15, 1947 on a hunch, without giving thought to the likely holocaust which would result in the largest ever migration of human beings. With passions running high, the same people who had lived in relative harmony as neighbours for centuries turned against each other. At a press conference on June 14, 1947, the Viceroy declared; "Once partition is accepted, I shall see that there are no communal disturbances in the country... I shall not even use the police. I will order army and air force to act and I will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble".

We know, to our horror, how an autocratic ruler, in conjunction with Indian leaders, called, "Men of Straw" by Winston Churchill, can cause so much misery to so many, when a thoughtful political appreciation would have ensured postponement of Independence to the target date, ensuring orderly migration in both directions. In the event, the British troops were homeward bound, and the Indian Army units and personnel in mixed regiments were in the process of leaving their peace time stations to go to their respective countries. Police turned, by and large, communal. The carnage that took place, could have been largely averted, if Mountbatten had made proper plans for regulated transfer of the population with the British-Indian Army escorting the convoys and trains. A period of nine months was sufficient to plan and deploy the troops in that role. One cannot but infer that Mountbatten must share with the Congress and the League leadership the blame for causing the worst massacres and suffering to millions of people in all time.

POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

We have already gone into some detail of Centre-Sikh relations. Sadly, the Sikhs were betrayed in every conceivable manner by the very same leaders who had made solemn promises and had now become the rulers of India. They disdainfully scoffed at any and every approach the Sikh leaders made to get their due and for the redressal of their grievances. A deliberate policy was enunciated to make them second class citizens through persistent discrimination and high-handedness. Most of this is, no doubt, known. However, some facts need to be recapitulated to make this painful story complete:

1. Soon after independence, the Nehru-Patel combine sent out a missive, branding the Sikhs as a criminal tribe under the Criminal Tribes Act. That this horrendous circular was later suppressed, does not detract from the grossly anti-Sikh bias, and brings into focus the mind-set of the Indian state. That was the very first 'reward' received by the Sikhs.
2. Far from giving special status to the Sikhs and honouring the commitments made, they were not even treated on a par with other states. Reorganisation of states on the basis of language was an article of faith, affirmed almost at every Congress session and other forums. Yet, the Sikhs had to struggle for 19 years and ultimately

got a truncated, moth-eaten Punjabi *suba*. Nehru first took the position that every village and street in the town of Punjab was bilingual. A greater lie could not be invented. When the Sikh leaders approached Raja ji, Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Azad to talk to Nehru, he told them, "I shut my ears when someone speaks to me about honouring the promises made to the Sikhs during independence movement". Contrast this with his pre-independence promises.

3. In 1956, a Parliament Act known as the Regional Formula dividing the State into Punjabi and Hindi speaking areas, was passed. For a decade, it worked admirably without protest from any quarter. After Nehru's death, and primarily because of the significant contribution of the Sikhs, soldiers and civilians alike, in winning the 1965 Indo-Pak war, the Shastri Government felt that the Sikhs should after all be given a propitiatory 'gift' by carving out the Punjabi speaking state. In pursuance, a parliamentary committee headed by Sardar Hukam Singh, was set up. Hukam Singh was selected for the job because of an innocuous statement he made at a party that Punjabi *suba* was not in the interest of the Sikhs. After long deliberations, the Committee came to the conclusion that the area west of the boundary dividing linguistic regions should constitute Punjabi *suba*. About a week before the Committee's report was to be tabled in the Lok Sabha, it leaked out. That so upset the Government, most particularly Indira Gandhi, that she convinced Prime Minister Shastri, Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda and others who mattered, to scuttle the report. In this connection, let me quote Hukam Singh in his own words:

"Every effort was made by Mrs. Gandhi, Mr. Shashtri and Mr. Nanda to stop me from making the report. But when nothing succeeded, the Congress forestalled the Parliamentary Committee Report by agreeing to reorganise Punjab by a vague resolution dated March 9, while the Committee Report was signed on March 15, 1966, i.e., a week later. It was a deliberate attempt to by-pass this Committee and undermine its importance.

"The Parliamentary Committee had come to these conclusions:

- i. The present state of Punjab be reorganised on linguistic basis;

- ii. The Punjab region specified in the first schedule to the Punjab Regional Committee Order, 1957, should form a unilingual Punjabi State."

As is known, subsequently the Shah Commission was constituted with terms of reference heavily loaded against Punjab. The 1961 census in which, unfortunately, a large majority of the Punjabi speaking Hindus had, by virtue of a Government design and anti-Sikh Hindu leadership, led by the likes of Lala Jagat Narain and deviously by people like Gulzari Lal Nanda, and Prem Bhatia, had been so brain-washed that they brazenly lied that their mother tongue was Hindi. Ironically, they made such statements in Punjabi, the only language they spoke! That was the original sin resulting in colossal trauma and suffering the inhabitants of this region went through. It also highlights the much flaunted commitment to the Constitution, democratic institutions and secularism, observed more in breach than implementation. So, after years of struggle, what we have, is not a Punjabi speaking state, but a Sikh majority state, based strictly on communal and not linguistic basis. It is a consequence of diabolic intrigue at the highest level.

4. It boggles one's mind that the Shah Commission had not only awarded large chunks of Punjabi speaking areas to the neighbouring states but also the capital town of Chandigarh to Haryana, where all but a few job seekers from other states speak Punjabi. When this grave injustice was brought to the notice of the Government, it agreed to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab under the notorious Indra Gandhi Award whereby Punjab had to part with the Fazilka and Abohar *tehsils* in lieu, which, in essence, is far worse than even the present unacceptable arrangement of making Chandigarh a Union Territory. Pray, what compensations were given to Gujarat in lieu of Bombay and other metropolitan cities similarly placed like Madras, Shimla and Shillong. If this is not discrimination, what is?
5. Equally, if not more sinister, is the anti-Punjab policy in regard to the Punjab river waters. In its nefarious game to deny the Constitutional rights over its rivers and hydel power, the Centre included sections 78 to 80 in the Punjab Reorganisation Act, which enabled it to give 75% of these resources to the state of Haryana, Rajasthan

and Delhi through the Govt. of India Order of 1976. The powers of control, administration and running of multipurpose projects on the Punjab rivers were arrogantly transferred from the strictly State subject to the Centre. Not only is it unconstitutional but Punjab is the only state in the country where these powers have been usurped by the Centre. In this connection, I would like to quote one of the numerous National and International authorities vis-a-vis the riparian laws. The decision of the Narmada Tribunal argued by the best legal talent of India including Palkhiwala, Daphtri, A.K. Sen, Nariman and Niren De:

"The State of Rajasthan is not entitled to any portion of the waters of Narmada basin on the ground that the state of Rajasthan is not a co-riparian or that any portion of its territory is situated in the basin of river Narmada."

Applying the same principle, Haryana and Rajasthan are not entitled to any water from Punjab, as they are outside the basin of its rivers.

It may be recalled that there was drought for 4 to 5 years in the late eighties in California, in which sizeable tracts of Federal lands are situated. The latter's request for providing a portion of the available water for its lands was rejected out of hand by the State. Nearer home, when the Maharaja of Bikaner applied to the Viceroy for diversion of some surplus water from the Satluj for irrigation in the parched Ganga Nagar area, the Viceroy replied that he had no jurisdiction over the rivers flowing through the provinces, and that he should apply to the Governor of Punjab. Consequently, an agreement was arrived at, whereby, Bikaner had to pay royalty to Punjab and also settle a large number of Punjabi farmers in the potentially productive land along the Ganga canal. That is how we find prosperous Sikh farmers in the present Ganga Nagar district.

Taking water over long distances is not cost effective. The prohibitive project outlay, evaporation and seepage make it wasteful. Large areas along the canal in Rajasthan have grievously suffered from salinity and have become marshlands.

Out of 105 *lakh* acres of cultivable land in Punjab, about 90 *lakh* acres are presently irrigated; about 37 *lakh* acres are partially

irrigated by canals and the remainder 53 *lakh* acres by tubewells. Against 3 to 3.5 m.a.f. of sub soil (rechargeable water) available, 8 *lakh* tubewells are extracting 12 to 13 m.a.f. annually. Time is not far when it will not be possible to economically draw water from the resultant lower water table making 80% of the 53 *lakh* acres barren. Besides destroying the Punjab economy, it will play havoc with the eco-system.

Although Punjab covers less than 2% of India's land mass, it contributes about 60% of food grains to the national kitty. If the water policy is fully implemented, the food basket of India will become a deficit state. Will India then go round the world with a begging bowl? There is little likelihood of PL 480 being repeated when the U.S.A. wrote off most of India's debt on this account. In sum, let me caution the Government that Punjab does not have a single drop of water to spare, and should the SYL canal project be revived, the consequences will be too bad for the country.

Lately, a matured statesman S.P. Dang and some others have been pleading Haryana's claim over Punjab river waters. Where were they when the Yamuna water was being allocated to various states? Wasn't erstwhile Punjab co-riparian, and on the grounds of equity, the present Punjab would be entitled to a substantial portion of the Yumana water? What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander! On the economic front, the vast majority of Sikhs are rural based, engaged in the agriculture sector in which they have been recognised as practitioners par excellence. They have proved to be the best colonizers wherever new ground had to be broken. Canal colonies now in Pakistan after the first World War, Ganga Nagar in the 1920s or in the most inhospitable Terai areas of U.P. after independence, are outstanding examples.

It is an axiom of economics of rural agriculture that as the stock of cultivable land approaches peak exploitation, there must be major shifts in the employment pattern from agriculture to industry, trade and other diverse occupations. During the past 120 years in the U.S.A., agricultural employment has shrunk from 60% to less than 3%. Much the same situation prevails in the other developed countries. By the end of the seventies, the Punjab would have neatly fitted into that pattern. Instead, the Indian state

has thwarted this process not only by denying Punjab control over its only worthwhile natural resource, water, but the credit deposit ratio in Punjab is the lowest in the country. This is indicative of the fact that growth of industrial development in Punjab is stagnant compared to other progressive states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

ARMED FORCES

The story of discriminations will, despite many commissions, remain incomplete unless we briefly discuss the position of the Sikhs in the Armed Forces. During the *Raj* days, the strength of the Indian Army before World War II was two *lakhs*, comprising 80,000 British and 1,20,000 Indian troops officered by the British with a sprinkling of Indian Officers at the lower level. The Sikhs, comprised over 25% of the Defence Forces. I happened to be at the Indian Military Academy during 1946-47 when permanent regular commissions had been re-started after the War. The Sikh gentlemen cadets were around 30%. The percentage went up to over 40 after the Muslim GCs left for Pakistan in Aug., 1947. Under the present dispensation, there are now less than 8% Sikh troops and you hardly find any Sikhs in the military academies. In fact, during Jagjiwan Ram's tenure as Defence Minister, a policy of recruitment on the basis of population was evolved in total violation of the general policy of merit alone being the criterion for Central Services. Time is not far when 98% combatants will be non-Sikhs. Known as among the best soldiers in the world, it will be a tragedy for the country, should India engage in a serious war. Besides, it will foreclose another important avenue of employment for the Sikh youth thereby adding to their unemployment figures. Let me quote General Atiq-ur- Rehman, one of the best Officers the Subcontinent has produced, who later became governor of the United province of west Pakistan:

"Sikhs are the finest soldiers in the world, because, they have the best combination of mental and physical endurance."

SIKH MILITANCY

Having briefly surveyed the betrayal, discrimination and anti-Sikh communal policies, the diabolical intrigue of the Indian state to keep them as a subjugated race, we come to the even more horrific

situation whereby their very identity and survival are in jeopardy, assiduously pursued particularly after operation "Blue Star" over 11 years ago. When Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was first cultivated by Indira Gandhi, Zail Singh and Sanjay Gandhi to checkmate the Akalis, became aware that the Trio wanted to use him against his own community, he not only abandoned the Congress and its Government, but became the tallest Sikh leader of his time. He raised his voice against persistent injustice to the Sikhs. But the Government had its own long term design not only to finish off the *Sant* but to teach the Sikh people a lesson. He was allowed, infact encouraged, to believe that the law of the land did not apply to him. He could move about in a convoy of vehicles with armed persons, with or without licence, anywhere in the country. He could fortify the Golden Temple Complex to ward off any assault by the security forces. In the smuggling of arms, a third Agency, an especially created supra-intelligence service, totally dedicated to Indira Gandhi, was created, superseding in many ways the CBI and RAW. Col. Alexander of that outfit was given the responsibility for allowing and abetting introduction of arms into the Complex with a view to creating a scenario to fool the international community that the Government had no alternative to a military solution.

Operation Bluestar was meant not only to kill or capture Bhindranwale and about 150 freedom fighters led by ex-Major General Shahbeg Singh, but to demoralise the Sikh nation; the primary aim in war. Time does not permit examination of strategy and tactics employed by the Indian Army, except to state that never had so few fought so valiantly against one of the mightiest armies equipped with modern weapons having a numerical superiority 100 to 1. The defenders of the holy shrines inflicted such heavy casualties that it will be remembered as a shining example in the annals of military history. When 9 Infantry Division under the command of Maj. Gen. K.S. Brar, failed to reduce the defences, having employed all weapons except tanks, Lt. Gen. Sunder Ji, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command alongwith Lt. Gen. Ranjit Singh Dayal, Advisor to the Punjab Governor, his command post not far from the Temple, approached the Prime Minister via COAS Gen. Vaidya, Deputy Defence Ministers Singh Deo and Arun Singh who were all present in the Army H.Q. Operation Room during the night 5th and 6th June, for permission to employ tanks. The *Akal Takht* was destroyed, and Dar-

shani Deori damaged alongwith several other historic buildings. Thousands were killed. Hundreds of innocent worshipper were taken prisoners. The Sikh Reference Library was torched deliberately two days after the cessation of hostilities.

The most effective way of subjugating and enslaving a nation is to destroy or falsify its history, its heritage and the sources of inspiration which sustain it. The Indian state very nearly achieved that aim vis-a-vis the Sikhs.

The 'prisoners' were neither treated under the Army Act governed *inter alia*, by the Geneva Convention nor under this country's penal code, whereby the 'culprit' has to be produced in the court within 24 hours. Many perished in the interrogation centres (infact, torture chambers) and the notorious Nabha Jail, hundreds were transported to jails outside Punjab where they were treated so inhumanly that dozens became insane. They languished in prisons for years without trial. I understand that some of them have yet not been released. There is no such example in any civilised country since the medieval times.

Operation Bluestar was followed by a mopping up operation code-named Woodrose. Such operations are restricted to the area immediately behind the captured objective to take care of any enemy lurking there. Woodrose covered the entire state of Punjab, which had been kept under strict curfew for some days before, during and after Bluestar. Every Sikh was a suspect. Killings, arrests, torture and rape were common place. It was a year long nightmare for the Punjabis. To save their skin, some young Sikhs slipped into Pakistan. For that country, it was a godsend opportunity to do "Bangladesh" on India by proxy. These two operations were the root cause of the rise of Sikh militancy. I hold Govt. of India entirely responsible for bringing about this situation.

One would wonder how a disciplined force like the Indian Army was so brutalized. It was essentially through persistent indoctrination. I shall read out an excerpt from the July, 1984 *Baat Cheet* (Talking points) issued by Army H.Q. to all formations and units to substantiate my point:

"Although majority of the terrorists have been dealt with and bulk of the Arms and ammunition recovered, yet a large number

of them are still at large. They have to be subdued... Any knowledge of the 'Amritdharis' who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murder, arson and acts of terrorism, should immediately be brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from outside but they are basically committed to terrorism. In the interest of all of us, their identity and whereabouts must always be disclosed."

Over 95% adult Sikhs are *amritdharis*, "Committed to murder, arson and terrorism"! This kind of propaganda was not restricted to Defence Services. Indira Gandhi herself went around the world maligning Sikhs as terrorists and secessionists. Indian embassies abroad are still pursuing state sponsored disinformation campaign.

When Woodrose was still in force, Indira Gandhi was assassinated within five months of launching of Bluestar. Her surviving son Rajiv Gandhi took over. What followed, cannot adequately be described. Unbridled massacre of Sikhs, rape and abduction of their women, torching of their homes and commercial properties with a brutality, much worse in many ways than the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah, who punished all communities without favour or discrimination. A more pertinent example is of the Czar-backed 'Black Hundred', an army of thugs, who slaughtered Jews in anti-semitic pogroms. More recently the extermination of Jews and Roma (who left India a thousand years ago) by Hitler but with one difference. Whereas Hitler used his government agencies to do the dirty work, here the majority community, the lumpens and policemen of Delhi in uniform and of Haryana and civvies were incited. With the curfew imposed, Sikh constabulary disarmed and ordered to barracks, and the segment of the Army which was mobilised was meant for the Prime Minister's funeral march and to reinforce formation in Punjab but not to stop mayhem. Such slogans as '*Khoon Ka Badla Khoon*', 'Sikhs have poisoned drinking water reservoirs', that trains coming to Delhi from Punjab are full of slaughtered 'Hindus', and that the Sikhs were 'celebrating the occasion by distributing sweets' were broadcast through moving vehicles equipped with PA equipment. Small wonder, therefore, that the vengeance with which law enforcement agencies and the *goondas* provided with cash, rum and weapons (similarly shaped iron rods), petroleum and black powder, only available in the Ordnance depots, were used not only in Delhi, but in other states ruled

by the Congress. To borrow Churchillian rhetoric; the Sikhs were killed in their homes, at their work places, on the streets, in the trains and vehicles, in their farms and subjected to other mind-boggling barbarities; without pity, without remorse.

The Government and media call this holocaust as Delhi riots, or at best anti-Sikh riots. It was pure and simple genocide, ethnic cleansing and crime against humanity. Since it was sponsored by people in power, none of the perpetrators of the heinous crime has been punished. On the contrary they have been rewarded in various ways. Much the same applies to the destroyers of holy places, killers and rapists during operations Bluestar and Woodrose.

Some countries like the U.S.A. have evolved criteria for declaring countries who 'export' terrorism. No such guidelines have been worked out for those countries which have consistently violated human rights, terrorised and indulged in all manner of crimes against their own people. If any such formula is chalked out, India will surely qualify to be in the top bracket of terrorist states.

In recent days, the Vohra report and many other individuals as well as NGOs have exposed the anti-citizen, anti-democracy and thoroughly violent and corrupt nexus between the politicians, mafia and police. This nexus has gravely undermined the credibility and the oft-trumpeted transparency. If even a semblance of civilised, humane behaviour is established in our life time, it will be a miracle.

THE ACCORD

When the Government thought it had succeeded in demoralising the community, and had broken the back of Sikh resistance, it initiated a scheme to draw the Sikhs into the mainstream. Consequently, an agreement known as the Rajiv - Longowal accord was signed. Except for Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh, it was kept a hush hush affair. It was infact a surrender document, the victorious (Rajiv Gandhi) drawing up the terms of surrender and the vanquished (Sant Langowal) signing on the dotted lines. Notwithstanding, such is the mindset of the ruling clique, that any clause even remotely in the interest of the Sikhs and Punjab was not implemented. Transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab on January 26, 1986 when all preparations were made, the U.T. staff paid upto date, the Punjab Governor received orders from the Prime Minister the previous night,

to cancel the exercise and maintain *status quo ante*.

Anti-Sikh policies have continued to be pursued by the successive Indian Governments, irrespective of whether the rulers were the Congress party or other national parties. This should leave no doubt in the minds of the Sikhs and the international community that the Sikhs can never expect justice — political, social, economic or even religious — in their own country, India. If in the circumstances they have achieved a degree of economic progress, it is not because of, but in spite of the Government. A brave and virile community, the Sikhs are intelligent, diligent, have the ability to take calculated risk and initiative, and possess a remarkable degree of entrepreneurship. Case in point; they have ushered in the Green Revolution and are way ahead of other sections of the Indian society in agriculture production. In the small scale industrial sector also, where the Government control is less stringent, they have surpassed others.

ELECTORAL GIMMICKS

Whenever the Akalis, by themselves or in conjunction with other non-Congress parties, formed a government in Punjab, it was never allowed to serve full term. Consequently, President's rule was repeatedly imposed in stark violation of the Constitution. The last time it lasted for nearly five years. When in Feb., 1992, elections were at last held, it was after the Centre was convinced that the Akalis would boycott them. The present Congress Government in the state was elected on 8% vote. It is, in effect, continuation of the Central rule by other means. This Government has no mandate of the people, and should have been sacked long ago. In no other democratic country, would such a farce be allowed; nor indeed in any other state of India.

In the 1989 Parliamentary elections, Punjab was debarred from assembly elections on the specious argument that free and fair elections in the state were not possible. How come that subterfuge did not apply to the Parliamentary elections? And, how come the Sikh leadership did not protest to either, and force the Government to concurrently hold assembly elections or boycott the Parliamentary elections. Notwithstanding, the Akalis polled a record vote with the Congress scraping through with just two seats. For the record let me state the fact that the Punjab elections were by far the most peaceful compared to any other state.

President Venkataraman, sworn to preserve and promote democracy played an unholy, unconstitutional and partisan role in connection with the elections in Punjab. In his autobiography, 'My Presidential Years', he makes a confession. Excerpts:

"The proclamation of President's Rule would expire on November 10 and there is no provision for further extension without a constitutional amendment. If not, the election process would have to commence by October 10. I advised Rajiv Gandhi that... an election in Punjab at such a time would be nothing short of a national disaster.... I also cautioned him that they might pass a resolution in the Assembly declaring Punjab as Khalistan State and internationalise the issue.... The Constitution (75th Amendment) Bill enabling the government to extend President's Rule... moved in the Lok Sabha on October 1, fell through.... Rule 338 of the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha bars re-introduction of a defeated Bill in the same session... The Constitution (76th Amendment) Bill was moved on October 4 in the Lok Sabha, the House voting for suspension of Rule 338. After a brief debate, the amendment was passed by an overwhelming majority of 432 out of 441 numbers present and voting. The same day Rajya Sabha also passed the Bill with equally impressive majority of 212 out of 218... I gave assent to the Bill the same day."

That is the way democracy works in India. When it suits their design to deny constitutional rights to a minority community, the President, the Executive and the Parliament all join hands to subvert the Constitution.

This act of Parliament reminds one of the 59th Constitutional Amendment whereby Punjab was singled out for imposition of Emergency when the Opposition would not allow it to cover the entire country. This is proof enough that Punjab is treated differently from the rest of the country; it can be degraded, its image tarnished by dubbing Sikhs as terrorists, where justice and rule of law can be dispensed with. This is yet another horrendous example of discrimination.

PUNJAB — A POLICE STATE

If there is a police state in India or elsewhere, it is the Punjab. Ever since Bluestar, the police, including paramilitary and other sundry security and allied agencies enjoy a virtual licence to commit any sins and crimes. The army, too, has been directed to give full support and backing to the police and there are instances where it has wantonly killed innocent people. A painful example is the cold blooded murder of Sikh farmers of village Nathu Ka Burj some 25 kilometres from the Indo-Pak border, who were going in their bullock cart to fetch diesel from a petrol station.

There have been more than twice the number of army and security personnel deployed in the Punjab than the total forces maintained by the British rulers in the entire subcontinent. However, the latter strictly observed the rule of law, and none could get away with extrajudicial or custodial crimes. The Punjab Police, on the other hand, are encouraged to commit any crimes viz., extrajudicial killings, rape, torture, extortion, prolonged illegal detention and custodial deaths. According to the PCS Officers, and indeed many national and international human rights organisations, over one *lakh* Sikhs have been killed since operation Bluestar. Many times more have suffered other forms of indignities and oppression, in some ways far worse than death.

The Punjab has more DGPs, ADGPs and IGs than the total number of IGs in the entire British India. The last count was: 5 DGPs, 7 ADGPs and 17 IGs. The over 60,000 Punjab Police is at least 10 times more than what this area had after the partition and would be under the command of just one DIG. They now number 24. Add to this force many other forms of security forces comprising paramilitary, homeguards and SPOs. Together with the Armed Forces deployed in this state the troops police to citizens as well as space ratio is by far the highest in the world. Far from being punished for their wrong doings, the more brutal they are, the higher they go in the hierarchy. As many as 40,000 have been rewarded by the Government during the last two years, not for their sacrifices in the line of duty, but for the variety of crimes committed against their own fellowmen!

There is, however, a small silver lining in the dark clouds over the Punjab. After remaining mere spectator for a decade, the judiciary has suddenly woken up. In the Apex Court as well as the Punjab and

Haryana High Court, the judges have started taking *suo moto* action against serious crimes committed by the police, even though it may account for one in a thousand cases that should have been tried by the courts. I would be failing in my analysis if I did not mention the objective approach of almost all the designated courts for TADA detenu. Not more than one in 400 accused has been found guilty and punished. That the victims of this blackest of black laws have suffered years of detention, humiliation and torture is a long and painful story. Being a victim myself and having come across a number of fellow sufferers in prison, it would be difficult to imagine that any civilised country could have such laws on its statute. That the police excesses did not even conform to the evil provisions of TADA, only proves the point that it is law unto itself.

The Punjab Police does not restrict its criminal activities to this state only, they go to other states as well, in most cases even without informing the latter, let alone taking their prior permission, to kill in cold blood, whom they latter dub as suspected terrorists. Their credo: kill first and ask questions later; much the same way as the notorious mafias function. The difference lies in scale. Whereas the latter did that in case of a few "traitors" or advesaries, the former have exterminated tens of thousands. If a case against the killers is registered, the police top brass and the state government shield them and pay for their legal expenses, intimidate and kidnap witnesses. It hardly needs emphasis that no district police chief can send a posse of his subordinates out of his own jurisdiction. The Government and the top echelon of the police, alone are competent to take such action.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

After years of persistent repression by the Indian State, one would have thought that a self-respecting and self-sacrificing people, the Sikh leaders would protest with equal tenacity, by different democratic methods, like non-co-operation, and motivate the Sikh masses for a worldwide peaceful agitation. But, unfortunately, the majority of our leaders have only two aims: one, to prove that their faction has greater following and, two, to somehow form a government in Punjab. They have no qualms of conscience even to go back on the pledges made at the highest spiritucal-cum-temporal seat, the *Akal Takht*.

The story of gruesome massacres collectively as in the case of operation Bluestar and post Indira Gandhi assassination, and selectively ever since, is endless. But, the Sikh people worldwide should draw important lessons and take appropriate steps for their survival, for the maintenance of their distinct religio-political identity, and to ensure that they and their future generations can live with dignity and honour. I draw from this political appreciation the following conclusions:

1. The Sikhs are a nation in no way less than other nations like the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Jews. Even by dictionary definition, a nation means;

"A body of people marked off by common descent, language, culture or historical tradition; the people of a state."
(Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary).

Additionally, Sikhs belong to a common religion, have a preponderant majority in a sizable geographical area and have been proclaimed as the Khalsa brotherhood by the great Guru Gobind Singh.

2. Lately, there has been open debate in the media and Sikh fora, over the status and authority of the *Jathedar* of *Akal Takht*. I wish to submit, in all humility, that while the *Takht* remains supreme, it is not synonymous with its *Jathedar*. The SGPC should involve the whole Panth in its selection of the *Jathedar* which should be based on personal piety, knowledge of Sikh scripture, tradition, history and ethos as well as reasonable knowledge of other major religions.
3. SGPC has inherited all the disadvantages of electoral system reducing it to a political organisation indulging more in politics than propagation of Sikh religion. The enormous funds at its disposal have not always been used for productive purposes or for setting up educational institutions of international standard, preaching the Gurus' gospel and for creating awareness among the masses of our noble heritage to bring about a sea change in their psyche. Ways have to be found to improve the situation. No other religion or church has anything comparable to SGPC, and yet their religious institutions at local, national and international levels are doing a far better job than the much trumpeted SGPC. The boundaries of the Punjab should conform to those accepted under the Regional Formula in the 1950's.

4. No group of people, large or small, religious, ethnic, or even constitutionally formed has the moral right to rule over another group of people who qualify as a nation without the latter's consent. Sikhs are a glaring case in point. To substantiate my argument, I would like to quote specific provision from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which India is a signatory:

"Article 1 — All people have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

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AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB FALLACIES AND FACTS

Dr Devinder Singh Chahal

1. INTRODUCTION

The fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun, received the inherited treasure (word) of his predecessors and of some *Bhagats* from the fourth Nanak, Guru Ram Das. He added his own *bani* and *Bhattachan de Swayais* to this treasure and entrusted the work of compiling it into a Granth (holy book) to Bhai Gurdas. The work was completed in 1604 CE (9, 15). The *bani* of the Sikh Gurus is called *Gurbani* and that of *Bhagats* is called *Bhagat bani* (2, 6, 10). Some *Bhatts* wrote some *swayias* in the praise of the first five Gurus, called *Bhattachan de Swayie*. These have also been included in the Granth. *Bhagat bani* was added to the Granth as contemporary literature. As *shabad* (word) has been equated with Guru in many verses in *Gurbani*, the *shabad* is the Guru of the Sikhs.

In 1707, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) added the *Gurbani* of the ninth Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) in it (8). Before his demise in 1708, he reiterated the *shabad* as the only Guru for the Sikhs, and declared that there would be no guru in person henceforth (8). As the *shabad* Guru is enshrined in the Granth, *ipso facto*, this Granth becomes the Guru of the Sikhs. The status of Guru was bestowed only to the Aad Granth by Guru Gobind Singh, and nowhere in any literature has he suggested this honour to his own *bani*. As this is the primary Granth containing the *Gurbani* of the Sikh Gurus, therefore, an adjective, *Aad* (primary, first, foremost), is added to its name. A suffix, *Sahib*, is usually added to it, as *Sahib* is equated with the Almighty in *Gurbani*. Therefore, it would be appropriate to call this Granth as Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) (1).

Unfortunately, scholars of Sikh studies are not consistent on the title of the Granth. There is also not a uniform style of referencing the Granth and its *bani* in research papers and popular articles. In this paper, coining of an appropriate title of the Granth, history of com-

pilation of *bani* into a Granth, its salient features, its language, and standardization of a system of referencing the *bani* from the AGGS in research papers and popular articles, have been discussed.

2. TITLE OF THE GRANTH

It is not very clear from the studies (3, 9, 11, 15) of the original Granth, as to what was the original title assigned to the Granth by Guru Arjun at the time of its compilation. Bhai Jodh Singh (11) reported a letter of Bhai Kahn Singh in which the latter has shown that two titles, i.e., *Pothi* (book, granth) and *Guru Baba* (Father Guru), were used at the end of the Table of Contents of the Kartarpuri Bir. The exact wordings are as follows: ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੬੧ ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਵਲੀ ੧ ਪੇਥੀ ਲਿਖ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ॥ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਤਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਦੇ ੯੭੪ ॥ (*Samat* 1661 dated *Badhon* 1 of second half, writing of *Pothi* was completed. Total leaves of *Guru Baba* are 974). But Bhai Jodh Singh has given entirely a different version of this, which is as follows: ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੬੧ ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਵਲੀ ਇਕਮ ੧ ਪੇਥੀ ਲਿਖ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ॥ (*Samat* 1661 dated *Badhon* first (1) of the second half, writing of *Pothi* completed. These words were in the beginning of the Table of Contents. Moreover, Bhai Jodh Singh (11) categorically refuted the claim, "Total leaves of *Guru Baba* are 974", of Bhai Kahn Singh that these words were not found written in the Table of Contents or anywhere else in the Kartarpuri Bir.

Apparently, there were originally two titles, i.e., *Pothi* and *Guru Baba*, of the Granth in its Table of Contents. Beside this, it was also found to be called by another title, *Darbar Sahib* in a note on title page of the manuscript accession # 2889, Rare Books Section, Sri Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Professor Sahib Singh (15) used a title, *Aad Bir*, for the original Granth in his book, *Aad Bir Bare*. Therefore, it appears that all the other titles assigned to the Granth are the work of later, ancient and modern scholars. The most prevalent titles are as follow:

1. Adi Granth,
2. Adi Guru Granth,
3. Adi Guru Granth Sahib,
4. Guru Granth,
5. Guru Granth Sahib,

6. Sri Guru Granth,
7. Sri Guru Granth Sahib,
8. Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib, etc.

The adjective, *Sri*, is the most recent addition in the title. It is added before 'Guru' by many writers out of devotion, e.g., 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan' by Dr Sahib Singh (16); 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' (English version) by Dr Gopal Singh (7); 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' (English version) by Gurbachan Singh Talib (19), etc. Similarly, the Granth published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar has *Sri* before Guru in its title as 'Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib' (1). Fortunately, the SGPC has retained the adjective, *Aad*, which has been rarely used by Sikh scholars. *Aad* is the most important adjective that gives the real characteristic to the Granth of being the first or primary Granth. Some scholars think that the adjective, *Aad*, is used only for the Granth originally compiled by Guru Arjun. This is a fallacy, because the present Aad Guru Granth Sahib is the same Granth of Guru Arjun in which the *Gurbani* of the ninth Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was added by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh. Therefore, the present Granth is the Aad Guru Granth Sahib.

The adjective, *Sri*, used with Guru is redundant, because there is no adjective that could qualify the Guru. Because 'Guru' itself is of the higher order than *Sri*. Moreover, *Sri* is a very commonly used title to address even a common man in India, as Mr. is used in the western world. It should be noticed that *Sri* has never been used as an adjective for the Guru in the *Gurbani* by the Sikh Gurus, which has been enshrined in the AGGS.

Harinder Singh Mehboob (4) used the title 'Guru Granth Sahib' without *Sri* throughout his book, 'Sehje Rachio Khalsa'. Dr Kohli (3) did not use *Sri* in the title of his book, 'Sikhism and Guru Granth Sahib'. Taran Singh (17) did not use *Sri* for the title of his book, 'Guru Granth Ratnavali', published by the Punjabi University, Patiala. Although Dr Gopal Singh (7) used *Sri* for the title of his four volumes of 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', he used only Guru Granth Sahib without *Sri* at the bottom of every alternate page in all the four volumes. From the above examples, it is clear that *Sri* is used sometimes and is omitted

frequently even in the same book or article by the same author. Keeping in view the above discussion, the use of the adjective *Sri*, in the title of the Granth appears redundant.

2.1 SPELLING OF "AAD" (ਆਦਿ)

In almost all the works in English, including 'The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism' (8), the "Aad" in the title of the Granth is spelled as "Adi" because '*sihari*' in Punjabi is translated as 'i' in English. On the other hand, when it is '*bihari*' it is also translated as 'i' in English. Here "ਆਦਿ" has been spelled "Aad", according to its pronunciation in Punjabi. The suggestive spelling has been coined keeping in view the pronunciation of the words in the AGGS, having *sihari* with the last letter as in ਆਦਿ, e.g., in *Jap*: ਏਕਿ, *ik* and ਹੁਕਮਿ, *hukm* in verse 2, ਕਥਿ, *kath* in verse 3, ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ, *gurmukh* in verse 5, ਸੁਰਤਿ, ਮਤਿ, ਮਨਿ, ਬਲਿ, ਸੁਰਿ, *surt, mat, man, bal*, and *sudh* in verse 36; ਮਨਿ, *man* on page 186; ਏਕਿ, *ik*, and ਕਰਿ, *kar* on page 566; ਹਰਿ, *har*, ਸਬਦਿ, *shabad*, ਸਹਜਿ, *sahaj*, ਘਟਿ, *ghat*, ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ, *gurmukh* on page 775 of the AGGS. The original meanings of "Aad" are: preceding all others in time, order or importance; first; primary; original; cardinal; outstanding; paramount; pivotal; etc.

When "Aad" is added to "Guru", it becomes "Aad Guru", meaning the Guru that precedes all others in time, order and importance. Thus "Aad Guru" becomes the Almighty, whereas "Sri Guru" remains as an ordinary Guru, because "Sri" is used for a common man on the street. Although some scholars may argue that "Sri Guru" means "Honourable Guru", even then it will not match the highest order of the "Aad". Thus, the title "Aad Guru Granth Sahib" means the Granth that contains the revealed *hani* of the Almighty, and it is the first, the primary, the cardinal and the pivotal Granth of the Sikhs. Keeping in view the above discussion the Granth should be addressed as "Aad Guru Granth Sahib", and "Sri", being a redundant adjective, should be deleted from the title. Therefore, it is suggested to the SGPC to hold a special meeting to modify the title as "Aad Guru Granth Sahib" in future publications of the Granth so that scholars are consistent in the use of the right title, Aad Guru Granth Sahib, of the Granth. It should be abbreviated as AGGS (1). The elimination of "Sri" from the title should not be a problem for the SGPC, because "Sri" was not used for its title when the Granth was compiled by Guru Arjun. He named it as "Pothi" and "Guru Baba" without the use of "Sri" in the Table of

Contents of the Granth compiled by him (11).

3. INHERITED TREASURE

There are many fallacies about the procurement of *Gurbani* by Guru Arjun. Harbhajan Singh (9) reported in his booklet, *Guru Maneo Granth*, that such fallacies have been introduced by Santokh Singh in his book, *Gurpratap Suraj*; by Swarup Das Bhalla in his book, *Mehma Prakash*; and by Giani Gian Singh in his book, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*. The same fallacies are found in *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshai*, anonymous. According to these scholars, before Guru Arjun, no Guru had written his *bani*. The idea of writing the *bani* and compilation of the *bani* of other Gurus came to Guru Arjun only. This has been compounded by Dr Pashaura Singh in his Ph.D. thesis (13). Thus, Guru Arjun had to procure the *bani* of his predecessors from other Sikhs who had written the *bani* by their own hands for their own purpose. The latter view is also held by Kohli (3), a reputed Sikh scholar.

There is another fallacy about the procurement of some *bani*, compiled into booklets (*pothian*), from Baba Mohan (for details see references # 9, 13, 15). This story has been fabricated by ancient scholars, linking it with a *shabad* from the AGGS. It is a long story saying that when Guru Arjun failed to procure the *pothian* through Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha, he went to Baba Mohan as directed by the spirit of Guru Amar Das. This appears to have been added by these scholars to create belief in miracles in Sikhism. It is said in this story that Guru Arjun, while seated in the street in front of the house of Baba Mohan, recited the following *shabad*:

ਮੇਹਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਊਚੇ ਮੇਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

ਮੇਹਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਦੁਆਰ ਜੀਉ ਸੰਤ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲਾ ॥ AGGS, M 5, p. 248.

Hey! the Almighty, You abide in Thy heavenly home (temple) of infinite glory and boundary. Hey! the Almighty, Your abode is beauteous, the sanctuary of the saints.

Dr Gopal Singh (7) has given a note under this *shabad* that the second, third and fourth verses are for the praise of Baba Mohan to persuade him to part with the *pothis*. But, if we look carefully into the theme of the whole *shabad*, the word, Mohan, is used here for the Almighty, and not for Baba Mohan. The above fallacies have been convincingly refuted by Harbhajan Singh (9) and Professor Sahib Singh

(15). In spite of the refutation of the above story, it is often narrated by *kirtan walas* and *khatha walas* in gurdwaras, when the above *shabad* is recited by them. It is a pity that nobody from the *sangat* (congregation) or no member of the executive of the gurdwara stops them from dissemination of such fallacies, which make Sikhism a religion of myths and miracles.

The most authentic information about the procurement of *Gurbani* is given by Prof. Sahib Singh (15), in his book, *Aad Bir Bare*, that the *Gurbani* written by the Gurus themselves, was passed on to the successive Gurus, until it reached Guru Arjun as an inherited treasure. He also mentioned that Guru Nanak had collected appropriate *banis* of *Bhagats* and saints that were also passed on to the successive Gurus. All the *banis* were already written under different *ragas* (musical modes). Guru Arjun organised the hymns systematically under different *ragas* according to the succession of the Sikh Gurus followed by his own and that of *Bhagats* and saints, for Bhai Gurdas to copy into a Granth.

On the other hand, Harinder Singh Mehboob (4) pointed out in his book, *Sahje Rachio Khalsa* (in note # 2 on page 1124) that there is no proof of handwritten *Gurbani* of Sikh Gurus so far. Most probably the theory of Mehboob is based on the information given by the ancient scholars like Santokh Singh, Swarup Das Bhalla and Giani Gian Singh, mentioned earlier. He has also mentioned that the draft of the Granth prepared by Guru Arjun and the original *Gurbani* of Guru Tegh Bahadur are not available. He tried to explain that *Gurbani* was passed on from one Guru to the successive Guru through transcendental power (*Gurliv*), and Guru Arjun dictated the Granth through this transcendental power. Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh dictated the whole Granth and added the *Gurbani* of Guru Tegh Bahadur at appropriate place in the AGGS through transcendental power or through the power of clairvoyance.

There is no doubt in the mind of anybody or of any Sikh that the Gurus could remember their own *bani* and that of the predecessors by heart, and that Guru Arjun and Guru Gobind Singh could dictate the whole Granth by heart. But, it is not logical at all that the Guru did not write their *bani* and did not preserve it for the use of the successive Gurus and for the use of their Sikhs.

It is a pity that such scholars did not care to look into AGGS, their Guru, to find the right answer to the above question about the procurement of *Gurbani*. There is solid evidence in AGGS that the treasure (*Gurbani*) of the predecessors was received by Guru Arjun from his father, Guru Ram Das, who received it from Guru Amar Das, and Guru Amar Das received it from his predecessors, Guru Angad and Guru Nanak. The following verse of Guru Arjun would explain this fact clearly. However, Mehboob (4, p.352) seems to be unconvinced by the following verse that Guru Arjun received that inherited treasure in the form of written material:

ਪੀਉਂ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥
 ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥੧॥
 ਰਤਨ ਲਾਲ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਮੇਲੁ ॥
 ਭਰੇ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਅਖੂਟ ਅਤੋਲੁ ॥੨॥
 ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥
 ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥੩॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇ ॥
 ਸੁ ਏਤੁ ਖਜਾਨੈ ਲਇਆ ਰਲਾਇ ॥੪॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 186.

"As the inherited Treasure (*Gurbani*) of our ancestors (Gurus) was opened and viewed,

My mind was illumined with the Treasure.

Compared to this Treasure jewels and rubies have no value.

The chest is full of inexhaustible and immeasurable Treasure.

Let us utilize it together, and dispense (disseminate) it amongst others,

O' Brothers.

The Treasure will not be exhausted. Instead, it will multiply manifold.

Nanak says, whosoever has the Grace of the Almighty, will be a shareholder of this Treasure."

3.1 GURUSHIP

Shabad or *Gurbani* has been treated as Guru from the very beginning. The support for this view is available in the *bani* itself, as recorded in the AGGS:

3.1.1 BANI IS THE WORD OF THE ALMIGHTY

ਜੇਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੇ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੇਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

AGGS, M. 1, p. 722.

As the *bani* (verse) is received from the Almighty,
I (Nanak) pass on the wisdom as such, O Lalo!

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਬਣੀਐ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਰੀਸੈ ਹੋਰਿ ਕਥੁ ਪਿਛੁ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਜੇ ਭੂਝਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਝੜਿ ਪੜੀਐ ॥

ਓਨ੍ਹਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਨੇ ਝਖਿ ਮਰਦੇ ਕੜੀਐ ॥

AGGS, M. 4, p. 304.

The *bani* of the True Guru is the image of the Almighty,
Through *Gurbani* we become the image of the Almighty.
Traders of falsehood utter immature *bani* and try to
imitate the True Guru.

Thus they fall down because they have something else in their
mind and utter something else.

They hanker after the money (*maya*), and consequently they
suffer.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਵਾਏ ॥

AGGS, M. 4, P. 308.

The *bani* of *Satguru* is Truth, accept it as Truth,
Hey *Gursikhs*! the Almighty makes the Guru utter it.

ਧਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ ॥

ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿਤਿ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 628.

This utterance came from the Primal Divine Source.
It has annulled all anxiety.

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣੀ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸਿ ਵਖਾਣੀ ॥

ਨਿਰਮਲ ਅਕਥ ਕਹਾਣੀ ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 629.

Bani of the perfect Guru is pleasing to the Almighty.
Nanak, servant of God, has manifested it.
It is inexpressible Divine discourse.

3.1.2 BANI IS THE GURU AND BANI OF SIKH GURUS IS GURBANI

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥

AGGS, M. 4, p. 982.

Bani is Guru and Guru is *bani*, and *amrit* (elixir)
is in the whole *bani*.

The Guru utters the *bani* and the follower (Sikh) accepts it
and the Guru makes it manifest.

ਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੇ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥
ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ AGGS, M. 3, p. 920.

Come O' beloved Sikhs (disciples of the Guru),
Sing the True *bani*. (Which *bani*?)
Sing the *bani* of the Guru (*Gurbani*), that is the highest
(supreme) of all *banis*.

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਸਬਦੈ ਚੀ ਤੇ ਸਹਜ ਉਪਜੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M. 3, p. 68.

O' Brother! The peace of mind, transcendental state, cannot
be achieved without the Guru. (Which Guru? *Shabad* Guru).
The peace of mind can be achieved only through the word
(*Gurbani*).

Through *Gurbani* one realizes the Almighty, who exists for
ever.

3.1.3 BANI OTHER THAN THAT OF THE SIKH GURUS IS IMMATURE

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ॥
ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਕਚੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥
ਕਹਦੇ ਕਚੇ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਕਚੇ ਕਚੀ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੀ ॥

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਰ ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ AGGS, M. 3, p. 920.

Without the True Guru's *bani*, all other *banis* are immature.
Immature is the *bani* that is not of the True Guru.

Immature are the utterers, immature are the listeners of such
banis, and immature are the reciters.

... ..

Nanak says, without the True Guru's, all other *bani* is immature.

ਸਫਲ ਸੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਨਾਮ ਵਖਾਣੀ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਿਨੈ ਫਿਰਲੈ ਜਾਣੀ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 103.

Only the *bani* that shows the path of the Almighty, is successful. Only rare people have realized this, with the Grace of the Almighty.

3.2 GURBANI IS FOR EVERYBODY

Guru Arjun says that the *bani* of the Sikh Gurus is equally valid for all types of peoples, even for those who are considered low caste in the society by Brahmins.

ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਸਭ ਏਕੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਤਰਾਨਥ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਸੁਨੈ ਸੇ ਪਾਹਿ ਪਰਾਨਥ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 1001.

Khattris, Brahmins, low castes, farmers (whatsoever the caste may be),

All those who realize the Almighty, can swim across the sea of life.

Guru Nanak teaches that those who would listen (to the *bani*) will cross the sea of life.

3.3 RECOGNITION OF BANI

Although *Gurbani* was written in the language spoken by the people at that time, even then many people missed its real perspective. It is even more true now when the Punjabi language has gone through so many modifications, since the AGGS was compiled. Thus, it has become more difficult for a modern scholar without having the knowledge of old Punjabi to understand and interpret *Gurbani* correctly. Guru Amar Das says:

ਸਚਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੀ ਹੋ ਬਾਣੀ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਫਿਰਲੇ ਕਿਨੈ ਪਛਾਣੀ॥

AGGS, M. 3, p. 1044.

The *shabad* is the Truth, the *bani* is the truth.

Only a rare *gurmukh* could fully grasp it.

All the above verses of the Sikh Gurus lead us to conclude that only the *bani*, which has been incorporated into the AGGS by Guru Arjun and Guru Gobind Singh, is the Guru of the Sikhs, and *ipso facto*, the Aad Guru Granth Sahib is the Guru of the Sikhs.

Because of lack of proper understanding of *Gurbani* by most, some cunning people pose themselves as gurus and demigurus under the garb of sainthood and exploit the innocent for their own motives. It is the duty of every Sikh, who understands *Gurbani* correctly, to dissuade the innocent Sikhs from becoming their prey. Such Sikhs should also convince other Sikhs to follow *Gurbani* enshrined in AGGS, and to lead an honest and moral life.

4. SALIENT FEATURES OF AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Although AGGS was compiled in 1604, the style of writing of AGGS by the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun, is comparable to that of a modern thesis or a dissertation embodying results of original research for substantiating specific views. It contains a summary (essence) in the beginning as in *Jap*, and then a discourse on Sikh philosophy with reference to previous Vedic and Semitic literature. It also contains the work of contemporary *Bhagats* and others. At the end, there are conclusions as a seal, *Mundanvani*. Finally, the acknowledgments are recorded under the heading of a *Slok*. This is the end of the whole text of the AGGS. However, after this *Slok* there is a small script called *Rag Mala* (Musical modes). There is much controversy about the authenticity of *Rag Mala* being a part of AGGS. As it is written after *Mundanvani* and the *Slok* that suggests the end of AGGS, therefore, it cannot be considered as a part of AGGS under any circumstances (Bhai Kahn Singh in Ref. # 11). But according to the "Sikh Rahit Maryada" (5) "*Bhog of Akhand Path*" (uninterrupted recitation of the whole AGGS) can be performed after recitation of the AGGS up to *Mundanvani* including *Slok*, or recitation of *Rag Mala* could also be included. The SGPC left it to the choice of the *Granthis* (who recite the *Akhand Path*) or the individual, to recite *Rag Mala* or not.

4.1 COMMENCEMENT OF AGGS

AGGS commences with a special verse. This verse is commonly known as *Mool Mantar* (the first mystical formula of invocation or incantation), although there is no such title for it in AGGS. It is so,

because the *Gurbani* does not believe in mystical formulae. It has been repeated as such more than 31 times, i.e., before the start of almost every *rag* and some major *banis* in AGGS. If it was a mantra then it would not have been shortened, because when a short or incomplete mantra is repeated, it loses its efficacy, a myth. The following interpretation of the commencing verse of the AGGS will clearly indicate that it is not a mantra or *Mool Mantar* in any respect, but a precise and concise definition of the Almighty, which is called *Manglacharan* in Punjabi:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

AGGS, *Maglacharan*, p. 1.

The Only Creator;
He exists for ever;
He is the Creator;
He is without fear (not governed by any other);
He is without any enmity;
He is timeless in existence;
He neither takes birth nor dies;
Created by Himself;
Blessing of the Almighty* (Described by the,).

4.2 EPILOGUE OF AGGS

Mundavani — Seal/Conclusions: The whole text of the AGGS is concluded with *Mundavani* followed by a *slok*. *Mundavani* means a seal to indicate completion, so that nothing could be added after that. It also means conclusions as explained in the text of verse as follows:

ਮੁੰਦਾਵਣੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫
ਬਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਤਿੰਨਿ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਈਓ, ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਵਚਿਰੇ ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਠਾਕਰੁ ਕਾ ਪਇਓ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਭਸੁ ਅਧਾਰੈ ॥
ਜੇ ਕੇ ਖਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਕੇ ਝੁੰਚੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੈ ॥

- It is very disappointing that in the UNESCO Collection (18), the most reputed theologians, Trilochan Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkrishan Singh and Khushwant Singh, have interpreted 'Gur Parsad' as 'By the Grace of the Guru made known to man'. This interpretation is accepted by almost every Sikh theologian and scholar. The irony is that there is no such word which could be interpreted as 'made known to man', it is simply 'Gur Parsad' which means 'with the Blessing of the Almighty'.

ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਖੁ ਉਚਿ ਧਾਰੇ ॥
 ਤਮ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚਰਨ ਲਗਿ ਤਰੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਸਾਰੇ ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 1429.

The Seal/Conclusions: The Fifth Nanak

In the platter (the Granth) are found three viands —
 truth, contentment and the *vichar* (contemplation)

The elixir, Name of the Almighty is also there,
 which is the sustenance.

Whosoever adopts (*khave*) it and practices (*bhunche*) it,
 is saved.

This substance can in no way be discarded.
 Even in the heart cherish it.

The sea of darkness can be crossed by following
 the instructions (*charan lag*) (recorded in the Granth).

Nanak says: The Almighty pervades everywhere.

The most outstanding aspect of *Mundawani* is an emphasis on three objects, i.e., one can get contentment after deliberating on the teachings of the Sikh Gurus given in *Gurbani*. It has also been advised by Guru Nanak that such deliberation is to be carried on with the *sangat* (congregation) in a gurdwara (AGGS, M. 1, pp. 729- 730).

Slok (Acknowledgments): With the following *slok*, the Fifth Nanak has acknowledged the Almighty for enabling him to compile the *bani* in a Granth:

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੫
 ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਤੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੈਨੇ ਜੋਗੁ ਕੀਤੇਈ ॥
 ਮੈ ਨਿਰਗੁਣਿਆਰੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਣੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਤਰਸੁ ਪਇਓਈ ॥
 ਤਰਸੁ ਪਇਆ ਮਿਹਰਾਮਤਿ ਹੋਈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਜਣੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਥੀਵੈ ਹਰਿਆ ॥

AGGS, M. 5, p. 1429.

Slok Mahla 5

(I am) unable to acknowledge (Your benefaction)

You made me worthy (of compiling the AGGS).

I, the meritless, have no merit whatsoever,

You took pity upon me (to make me worth for the above task),

With your grace was met the Holy Preceptor, true friend.

Nanak says: I can live only when the Almighty (*Naam*) is realized to blossom my body and mind.

Thus, the *Mundavani* and the *Slok* at the end of the *Granth* suggest the completion of the *Granth* in all respects. Therefore, any verse (including *Rag Mala*) after *Mundavani* and *Slok* cannot be considered as a part of the *Granth* under any circumstance.

4.3 RAGAS (MUSICAL MODES)

There are about 31 *ragas* (musical modes) under which most of the *Gurbani* and *bani* of *Bhagats* has been compiled in the AGGS. These *ragas* are: *Sri, Majh, Gouri, Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihagra, Vadhas, Sorath, Dhanasari, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gound, Ramkali, Nat Narain, Mali Gaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kaidara, Bhairon, Basant, Sarag/Sarang, Malhar, Kanra, Kalyan, Prabhati, and Jaijavanti.*

4.4 THE AUTHORS

AGGS contains *bani* of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Guru Angad (1504-1552), Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), Guru Arjun (1563-1606) and Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675). Almost every hymn of *Gurbani* ends with the name of Nanak as the author, whether it was revealed to Guru Nanak or any other Guru. This is a unique system for presenting oneness in the authorship of all the Sikh Gurus and oneness in the whole philosophy of the Sikh Gurus under Nanak. Nevertheless, the identity of the contributing Guru is specified under their succession number of the House of Nanak. The House of Nanak is represented as *Mahla* by Guru Arjun. Thus, the contribution of Guru Nanak is identified as *Mahla* 1, as he is the founder of Sikhism; the verse of the second guru, Guru Angad, is identified as *Mahla* 2, as he is the second in succession to the House of Nanak; the verse of the third guru, Guru Amar Das, is identified as *Mahla* 3; and so on.

The Sikh Gurus are sometimes addressed as follows: Guru Nanak as First Nanak; the second guru as Second Nanak; the third guru as Third Nanak; and so on. Some scholars have addressed the Sikh Gurus as follows: Guru Nanak as the First Master; the second guru as the Second Master; the third guru as the Third Master; and so on. Master means many things; a male teacher; a person holding an academic degree higher than a bachelor's but lower than a doctor's; a

revered religious leader; one having the authority over another; ruler; governor; etc., but does not signify oneness of the Sikh Gurus and their philosophy. Thus, the use of title Master for the Sikh Gurus is a fallacy.

AGGS also contains *bani* of *Bhagats* (devotees) namely Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Ravidas, Trilochan, Beni, Dhanna, Jaidev, Sain, Pipa Sadhna, Ramanand, and Parmanand; 4 saints, namely Bhikhan, Surdas, Sundar and Mardana; and praise of the first five Sikh Gurus by 17-19 Bhattis (bards) namely, Kal, Kalsahar, Tal, Jalap, Jal, Kirat, Sal, Bhal, Nal, Bhikha, Jalan, Das, Gayand, Sewak, Mathura, Bal, Harbans, Satta and Balwand. The names of some bards are confused with those of words of their verses.

Most of the verses included in the AGGS are grouped under the headings of *shabad*, *astpadis*, *chhants* and *vars* under each *rag*. The verses of Sikh Gurus are arranged according to their succession number of each Guru to the House of Nanak as *Mahla* 1, *Mahla* 2, *Mahla* 3, and so on, followed by the verses of *Bhagats*. The *swayais* of Bhattis are grouped together under one section in the AGGS. The number of hymns contributed by the Sikh Gurus and by the *Bhagats*, and *swayyas* of Bhattis recorded in the AGGS, are as follows:

<i>Mahla</i> 1 (Guru Nanak) = 947	Namdev = 62
<i>Mahla</i> 2 (Guru Angad) = 63	Parmanand = 1
<i>Mahla</i> 3 (Guru Amar Das) = 869	Pipa = 1
<i>Mahla</i> 4 (Guru Ram Das) = 638	Farid = 134
<i>Mahla</i> 5 (Guru Arjun) = 2312	Beni = 3
<i>Mahla</i> 9 (Guru Tegh Bahadur) = 115	Bhikhan = 2
Sundar = 6	Mardana = 2
Sadhna = 1	Ravidas = 40
Surdas = 2	Ramanand = 2
Sain = 1	Kabir = 534
Jaidev = 2	Trilochan = 5
Dhanna = 4	Bhattis = 124

Total verses = 5761 (For details see ref. # 3, 9, 14, 15, 16, 20).

Kohli (3) in his book, 'Sikhism and Guru Granth Sahib', and

Talib (20) in his book, 'An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib', have mentioned that one of the *sloks* of Guru Tegh Bahadur is of Guru Gobind Singh. This is obviously wrong, since there is no evidence to support this view.

4.5 LANGUAGE OF AGGS

The *bani* in AGGS is in the language spoken during their period between 15th and 17th century for writing their *bani*. Similarly, the *bani* of the *Bhagats* indicates that the language used by them was the language spoken by the people during their period between 12th and 17th century. During the period of *Bhagats* and the Sikh Gurus, Persian was the official language of the rulers, and Sanskrit was the language of the Vedas and other sacred books. Still the Gurus and *Bhagats* preferred to use the language, spoken by the people, so that their message was easily understood by the common people. If the language spoken by the peoples in the united Punjab about 50 years ago and the language of Punjabi literature of 18th and 19th century is compared with the language of the *bani*, one would easily agree to accept that the language of AGGS is archaic Punjabi with various dialects mixed with Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit words.

There are some verses (AGGS, M. 1 & 5, p. 1353) compiled under the heading of *Sahskriti Sloks*. According to Dr Gopal Singh (7), Dr Sahib Singh (16), and Talib (20) *Sahskriti Sloks* are not in Sanskrit but in a language between Prakrit and Sanskrit. However, according to Bhai Kahn Singh (12) *Sahskrit* is a language that originated from Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Further analysis of the language used in AGGS clearly shows that, there is not even a single verse in AGGS that can be identified as pure Sanskrit. But, there is an extensive use of Persian and Sanskrit vocabulary in many verses. Nevertheless, there is a very interesting observation that the language used by some *Bhagats*, who lived in North-eastern, Central, and South-western regions of India (far away from Punjab), resembles very much that of the archaic Punjabi used by the Sikh Gurus.

The language spoken today in the Punjab (India) is quite different from that spoken during the period of the Gurus and the *Bhagats* between the 12th and 17th century. With time it has become rather difficult to understand and interpret it. Knowledge of old languages and their grammar is essential to understand the *bani* from AGGS fully and correctly.

5. SYSTEM OF REFERENCING BANI FROM AGGS

It is a pity that Sikh scholars have not yet decided on a uniform system of referencing *bani* from AGGS. The system of citing varies from one author to another. Even the same author may use different systems in the same book or in the same article. Let us examine "An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib", by Dr Gurbachan Singh Talib (20), published by the Punjabi University, Patiala in 1991, as an example, in which he has used at least four different systems for referencing *bani* from AGGS.

1. (*Japji* 2); (*Anandu* 1); (*Sukhmani* 18.7); etc.:

There is no name of the author and there is no name of the source and no page number of the source, i.e., AGGS. He has emphasized the use of name of the *bani* like *Japji*, *Anandu*, *Siddha Goshti*, *Alahuniyan*, *Vars* and others with their unit number. But there are many *banis* in the AGGS that have no titles or names. How could these *banis* be cited?

2. (*Sorath* 32, page 617); (*Suhi* 1, page 728); (*Asa Chhant* 10, page 459); (*Ramkali*, *Ashtpadi* 5, page 906); etc.:

Now there is no name of the *bani* and no name of the author and no mention of the source, i.e., AGGS, but only *raga* and page number are given. Here, he preferred to use *raga* to cite the verse. But there are many verses in AGGS which are not composed under any *raga*.

3. (*Bihagara Chhant*, Guru Ram Das, 6, page 541); (*Var Ramkali*, Guru Arjun Dev, page 962); (Guru Arjun Dev, *Gouri* 99, page 185); (*Bhairon*, Guru Arjun Dev, 45, page 1149); etc.:

Although there are more details, these are still not consistent. Sometimes the serial number of the verse is given, and at another time it is missing. Sometime the *raga* is first, other time the author is first. In all the cases, the source, AGGS, is missing. Moreover, there are no such names as Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjun Dev attached to any verse in AGGS. The Sikh Gurus have been mentioned as the succession number of the Guru to the House of Nanak in AGGS, e.g., Guru Ram Das is mentioned as "Mahla 4" and Guru Arjun as "Mahla 5" as the authors of their verse. He ignored the unique system of authorship (*Mahla*) designed by Guru Arjun.

4. (*Majh* III, *Ashtpadi* 32, page 128); (*Gouri Cheti* V, 139, page 210) etc.:

There is the name of *raga* and also the succession number, but the word "*Mahla*" is missing and so is the source, i.e., AGGS. Until *Mahla* is written before III or V, this number could designate anything.

As a rule, the reference should be as short as possible, but it should give complete information. However, sometime more than six types of citations have been used by the same author in the same book or the same paper. It clearly indicates that there is no consistency in referencing *bani* from AGGS for research papers, books or popular articles. Therefore, there is a dire need of a standard reference system for *bani* in AGGS. Let us consider the following:

- I. The source of *bani* should be given. Here it is the Aad Guru Granth Sahib published by the SGPC and the text has been standardized on 1430 pages (1). No other source of AGGS except that published by the SGPC should be cited. The abbreviation, AGGS, should be used for Aad Guru Granth Sahib.
- II. The name of the author should be given. In case of the Sikh Gurus they should be referred to by their succession number to the House of Nanak in the form of *Mahla* (abbreviated as M.), e.g., Guru Nanak as M. 1, Guru Angad as M. 2, and so on, according to the system designed by Guru Arjun. When the author is a Bhagat, Saint or Bhatt his name should appear as Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Dhanna, Kal, Bal, Sal, and so on. They cannot be referred to as *Mahla*. Because the title, *Mahla*, is reserved for the Sikh Gurus only.
- III. The page number should be given as standardized by the SGPC.
- IV. *Ragas* need not be mentioned because there are some verses of *bani* without any *rag*.
- V. The name of the *bani* need not be mentioned because some *banis* are without any name or title.

Therefore, it is suggested to cite the *bani* of the Sikh Gurus as follows:

AGGS, M. 5, p 103

It means this citation is from Aad Guru Granth Sahib, abbreviated as AGGS, which has been published by SGPC; M. 5 means that the author is the fifth guru to the House of Nanak, i.e., fifth Nanak or Guru Arjun; and it appears on page 103 of the above source, i.e., AGGS.

Similarly, the *bani* of a Bhagat, Saint or Bhatt should be cited as follows:

AGGS, Kabir, p 323

It means the citation is from AGGS; the author is Bhagat Kabir; and the page 323 is of the source, i.e., AGGS.

With the above information, one can easily find the verse in AGGS. But, there is only one difficulty in the use of the above system of citation when the citation is from *Jap*. Many scholars use the title *Japji* or *Japji Sahib* for *Jap*. But, there is no such title in AGGS. Therefore, I use the real title "*Jap*" as given in AGGS. As no author has been assigned to it by Guru Arjun, no *Mahla* with any succession number can be assigned for the verses from *Jap*, although many scholars would agree that the *Jap* was composed by Guru Nanak. Therefore, a verse from *Jap* should be cited as follows:

AGGS, <*Jap* with verse number>, <page number of the AGGS>.

This is the only exception in the proposed citation system described above. Thus, the verse number 5, "*Thapia na jai kita na hoi...*" of *Jap* should be cited as follows:

AGGS, *Jap* 5, p 2.

I have used the word "verse" instead of commonly used word "Pauri" for verses from *Jap* because there is no such word, as *Pauri*, assigned to any of the 38 verse of *Jap* in AGGS. Nevertheless, *Pauri* has been used for many verses at other places in AGGS. (Note: The first verse of *Jap*, i.e., *Aad sach jugad sach...*, and the second verse, *Soche soch no hoi...*, carry the same numerical, i.e., 1. Thus, both verses could be cited as "AGGS, *Jap* 1, p. 1." and it will not be a problem to find these verses in AGGS on page 1.

Similarly, there is another difficulty in citing the first verse written in the beginning of AGGS before *Jap*. This first verse is

commonly named as "*Mool Mantar*" by many scholars, although there is no such title in the AGGS. As already explained, this is not a *Mool Mantar*, therefore, it cannot be cited as such. As AGGS begins or commences with this verse, it could be cited as, 'Commencement,. Therefore, the first verse of AGGS could be cited as follows:

AGGS, Commencement, p 1.

As the first verse is a definition of the Almighty and it is called *Manglacharan* in Punjabi, it can be more appropriately cited as follows:

AGGS, *Manglacharan*, p 1.

There is also no standardized system to write the reference of the AGGS in the list of "Literature Cited" or in the list of "References" given at the end. As we know its title, the names of the editors, the year of editing and the publishers, thus it could be referred to as follows:

AGGS: Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (Reprint). Pp 1430.

Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar (1).

I would like to make it clear here that these are suggestions for further discussion by a committee of Sikh scholars under the authority of SGPC to finalize the system of referencing for *bani* from AGGS. Anyhow, I would be using this form of citation in my present work and in all of my future publications. I would request other scholars also to use this system for the sake of uniformity in referencing *bani* from AGGS, until some more effective system is devised by the committee of scholars under the leadership of SGPC.

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OFFSHORE SIKHS: TRUSTS VS GURDWARA ELECTIONS (FALLOUT)

Har Iqbal Singh Sara

1. Empirically, it seems evident that traditional Sikh method is selection rather than election.
2. Prominently enough, the late Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh, ex. I.C.S., revered National Professor of Sikhism, used to highlight this historical conclusion, founded in the Sikh precept of 'numenism'. On that latter precept, I have good reason to believe, my old friend and scholar, Dr Gurmail Singh Sidhu, now of California, would have more to say, as his inspiration has led him to focus on that subject. This alone, no doubt, would keep the indomitable spirit of the Giant amongst intellectuals, as the great Sirdar was, alive. Because, Sirdar Kapur Singh oft emphasized 'numenism' as a distinguishing doctrine of Sikhism.
3. Today, Sikh gurdwaras (Sikh temples) are everywhere. But so are Sikh Gurdwara 'Societies'. There appears to be a 'dominos' effect. If there is, or has been, a Sikh Gurdwara Society, that is taken as reason enough to have one of our own. One can think of innumerable Societies, being used by Sikhs all across Canada and the U.S.A. The usual declared purposes of such Sikh Gurdwara Societies include, "to establish and operate places or centres of Sikh religious worship, or gurdwaras, etc."
4. When it comes to the property aspect of the gurdwara institution, one finds property of land usually legally invested or registered in the name of the particular Gurdwara Society. Because the Society, as a fictional 'person', can hold and transfer or acquire property. The Society is regulated by the rules of a usual 'Societies Act'. That necessitates the holding of annual general meetings, electing directors, setting their powers and duties as legislated, keeping membership registers, filing in government offices the annual reports and changes in directorship or registered office addresses.

All in all a tedious and cumbersome, and expensive, and restrictive, as well as a fractious lay out. The use of this method of gurdwara management and regulation has persistently illustrated its unsatisfactory nature. The Hindu press has lost no time in picking out the inevitable fights and ugly scenes precipitated by Gurdwara elections, everywhere in USA, Canada and U.K., thus, further to depict Sikhs as a backward and uncivilized community.

5. The question of property and a Gurdwara Society entails further complexity and complication. How can it be assumed that religious offerings of money, for instance, harvested at Sikh religious worship in a gurdwara, belongs to the Gurdwara Society? Nonetheless, all money thus accumulated is taken into the control of the directors of the particular Gurdwara Society, and is at their disposal. They may bank it in the Society's bank account, or appropriate it otherwise, as they may decide. The Society directors, elected in the western civilization's style and manner, are put in a position of authority where they not only control the property, associated with the function of a gurdwara, but also control the quality of spiritual services dispensed at a particular gurdwara. The donations, are offered to the gurdwara. Yet the directors of the Society are able to convert it to the credit of the statutory Society — which has been able to keep a gurdwara. If a gurdwara can be imagined as a cow, belonging to a Society, then the offerings are its milk, which the Society directors will take as their own. Indeed, gurdwara establishment can be viewed as a good piece of investment, which would pay off dividends in terms of money, political clout and social status, to a shrewed individual or group. No wonder gurdwaras (or the Societies that keep them) are a regular arena of power psyche of the *Charhdi-kala* seeking Khalsa! In every city, there seems to be a 'parliament' of Sikhs in north America. It is the local gurdwara and its elections. The reasons behind this phenomenon are quite obvious from the foregoing discussion. This gains an added dimension, since the Khalsa has no other sovereign territory to call its own. It is the gurdwara — and the gurdwara alone — that fills the bill, in the peculiar vacuum of statelessness.
6. It is submitted that, in general terms, the gurdwara operation and service should be supervised by a recognized ecclesiastical semi-

nary or 'Order' — to borrow terminology from Christian monastic organization — throughout Sikhdom. It ought not to be the turf of any changeable Society and its director — who come and go, as if through a revolving door. The functions of the Gurdwara, its property and its income (from donations and offerings) must not come into the hands of any directors of a statutory Society — in the business of gurdwaras. It is important that the Sikh nation should ensure that crass 'directors' of a venture must cease to become the policy makers of the Sikh religion, in different locations. Not infrequently they have played into the hands of our political detractors.

7. Consistent with Sikh traditions, the function of the North American Gurdwaras should be in the hands of suitable *Sewaks* or volunteers, committed enough to seek to render selfless service. Their appointment should be by common local consensus. The method of casting 'parchis' (or casting lots) has been historically used in line with the doctrine of 'numenism'. Thus, only by common consensus, would they be chosen, signifying the Guru's '*hukam*' or divine will. They would assume charge of the dispensations of a particular gurdwara. The standard of gurdwara service would be uniform and unadulterated, everywhere. The sole motivation of individuals would be service and service alone, for the Guru.
8. Such selfless service, in the Christian organization, is also evident. That is why there are 'sidesmen' in the Church of England; 'ushers' in the United Church in Canada, and church 'deacons' and other voluntary servants of the Christian religion. Actually, Sikhism is a great improvement and expansion of the role of church in Christianity. Sikhism is the synthesis of promise to fill both the spiritual and the temporal ambitions of the believer and the seeker. The Guru's dispensation is so complete. There is nothing left to be desired. The self-mastery, made possible by this fulfilment, has to be nothing but unique, in man's experience.

A SUGGESTION:

9. In this perspective, it is suggested that when a gurdwara is to be established or founded, when it is to be invested with property (land, money, or both), the Sikh donors (settlers) should first

consider creating a trust, appointing trustee/s. A trust should be created for the benefit of the gurdwara and its *sangat* or congregation and the Sikh public. A trust usually has some fund or money which is to be administrated. Income, such as offerings, could well be part of the same trust funds, and included therein. This would form an arrangement of an almost permanent nature, not susceptible to the unsettling and unpredictable changes consequent to the administration through a society or incorporation, and a succession of 'directors'.

10. Trusts are created either by the act of a party, or by operation of law — such a resulting trust, or a constructive trust. In most cases, at least 3 people are involved when a trust is created:

The Settlor — who creates the trust;

The Trustee — whose duty it is to carry out the terms of the trust;

The beneficiary — for whose benefit the trust is created.

The property which is the subject of the trust, is called the trust property.

11. By definition, therefore, a trust is an equitable obligation created by the 'settlor', binding the 'trustee' — to deal with the trust property, for the benefit of the 'beneficiary'.

The 'settlor' (such as the Sikh public or donors) himself may be a beneficiary. And any one of the beneficiaries may enforce the obligation.

12. Dealing with the question of gurdwaras and their property, especially in Britain, Canada and U.S.A., it would be well to focus on express trusts, created during lifetime, by the method of specific documents, for particular purposes. In creating express trusts, some common methods of creating these trusts are:

- a. A declaration by the owner of property that he (or, It, if it is a Society or company) holds it as Trustee for another person;

It is here, that it can be possible that a Gurdwara Society would declare that property recorded or registered in its name, is held in trust for so and so, such as, the Sikh worshippers, or at least the

Gurdwara congregation. If such 'declaration' is filed, there is no need for conveyance of the property and no passing of legal title. A common example is, where a parent is registered owner of a share certificate but is actually holding it on behalf of a child.

- b. A transfer, during life time, of the legal title to the property by the owner to another person as trustee, either for the transferor himself (such as the donor Sikh public or group), or, more usually, for a third person (which could, for instance, be the Sikh congregations, or even a Sikh society) linked with the gurdwara.

For example, A may give a share certificate to B, and cause it to be registered in B's name and B is to hold it for the benefit of C.

It is important also, that directions contained in a Trust must be imperative.

13. For comparison, the pattern of monastic church organization may be viewed at least as a point of reference, in the north American Sikhs' search for a better role and management of centres of Sikh religious worship — the gurdwaras. Since early English history, the instrument of 'trust' has played the desired role to make possible the endowment of property for the propagation and maintenance of Christian beliefs. Only thus had the monasteries been able to provide the vital support to the poor and the needy in Christendom. Sikhism and Christianity are prominent in emphasizing service to fellow man.
14. Visiting in Devonshire, England, last year, I took a tour to Buckfast abbey, of the order of Franciscan monks. It is not too far from Plymouth, on the west coastal district of Devon. The abbey had been wiped out, and disappeared altogether, in result of Henry VIII's supremacy, and suppression of the monasteries. When Henry came to the throne in 1509 A.D. much of the land in the kingdom was in the hands of the Church.

The cathedrals, monasteries, chapels, and abbeys held estates, by the income of which they were maintained. Henry the Tudor took it away from them. It caused much suffering to the poor, because the hungry, in the middle ages, had always been certain of a meal at the monastery gate. Our gurdwaras are a modern resonance of the spirit of Christianity in the medieval ages, in many respects.

The history of gurdwaras has indeed shaped the history of the Sikh nation. The Nankana Sahib liberation front, the Jallianwala Bagh agitation in Amritsar, and other assertions of the freedom of the Sikh church, are an important portion of the Anglo-Sikh history, following the loss of the Sikh kingdom to the Whitehall.

In any case, Father Nicholas conducted us on a intimate tour of the Buckfast abbey church. We learned that it was the absolute and single-minded dedication of just a few monks that rediscovered the old foundations of the lost abbey, earlier this century. Then, just 6 monks, who learned some skills on the job, reconstructed, over a period of 35 years, the present simple abbey in Gothic style of a pleasant aspect. It was finished in 1935. There it stands today, in the peace and tranquility of Devonshire countryside and its coastal hills. Yet, it wasn't there for 4 centuries!

What struck me particularly inside, was explanation of Father Nicholas about the figures of two deer (bucks) etched on the front side of the box-like table before the altar. The deer, he explained, thirsts for stream water, in biblical allegory, and is symbolic of man's thirst for the Supreme. Well, said I, this is certainly most remarkable. Because, the Sikh gospel of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, is also replete with similar similes. The oriental imagery recalls the anguished longing of Sarang, Papiha, Catrick, feathered creatures of different kind, for a drop of the rain water, conjuring the same thirst for God's name (Naam), attested to in the altar decorations of the Buckfast abbey church. '*Bhaj, Sarang Pani*', and many other references in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, repeat the same spirit in our religion.

15. In this perspective, it is high time for western Sikhs to reanalyse the role and effect of Sikh gurdwara managements. It is quite obvious that Sikhs, here and elsewhere, must have to back away from the internecine turmoil and friction that so characterizes our gurdwara elections. The competition for the impact of theological centres, be those Christian churches, or Sikh gurdwaras, makes such re-view of our gurdwara system, almost mandatory.

SIKHS AND SIKHISM NOW AND BEYOND 2000 IN CANADA

Dr D.S. Chahal

INTRODUCTION

The original home of the Sikhs was the North Western part of the Indian subcontinent lying between the Jamuna river and the Indus (Sind) river, the Punjab — the Land of Five Rivers. Their homeland was reduced to the Land of Three Rivers after partition of India in 1947. About 3,000 years ago, a peculiar civilization originated in the Punjab. It exploited people by dividing them into four different castes. The misery of the people under casteism opened the way for reformers who attacked the priestly class (Brahmins) and opposed the institution of caste. Since then many reformers, e.g., Buddha 560-480 BC, Ramanand, Gorakh, Chaitanya, Kabir, and a number of other *bhagats* between the 13th and 15th century CE, tried to liberate the people from these miseries. But it was Guru Nanak, who through his ten forms, founded the most scientific and logical religion, Sikhism, during the 15th century CE to liberate the people from the miseries of casteism, rituals, and superstitions (7, 10).

IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

The character of 'daring much and enduring much' of the Sikhs (7), has given them an edge over other people. Therefore, they will not hesitate even to endanger their lives to create conditions to better their living anywhere on this planet, the earth, or even beyond this planet. The real interest of immigration to Canada might have originated in the minds of Sikh troops of the British army based at Hong Kong, when they, along with other soldiers, sailed from Hong Kong to participate in the coronation of Edward VII in London. On their way to London, when they arrived at Vancouver, B.C. on June 3, 1903, they received a rousing welcome and were well treated during their stay. This trip imprinted a very good impression of natural sceneries and good climate of Vancouver in the minds of the Sikh troops (12).

The first group of Sikh immigrants arrived in Vancouver in 1913 and about, 6,000 Sikhs followed during the next four years, although there are some accounts of their arrival in Canada as early as 1886. Soon discrimination against Sikhs started to grow and immigration of non-whites was banned. However, when the ban was lifted after the independence of India, a continuous immigration to Canada started from 1951 from Punjab and other countries. The Sikh population of Greater Vancouver and Metropolitan Toronto rose to 30,000 each in early 1970s and rose to more than 50,000 each in late 1970s. During the unrest in the Punjab in 1980s several thousand Sikhs entered Canada as immigrants legally and as refugees. At present there are about 300,000 Sikhs forming about 1.2% of the Canadian population (12).

SIKHISM IN CANADA

Sikhism is the most scientific and logical religion of the world. Unfortunately, it is being Brahminized by certain Sikhs. Through the preaching by such Sikhs, understanding of Sikhism is degenerating at a very rapid speed in Canada and other countries. Although activities to undermine Sikhism started during the 18th century in India, it entered its exponential phase after June 1984, when the Indian army attacked the Akal Takht and the Darbar Sahib, the highest temporal and spiritual authorities in Sikhism, respectively. The irony is that it is being done by Sikhs, especially the so-called *sants* (saints), the *ragis*, the preachers and Sikh politicians coming from India and by those living in Canada, through gurdwaras, television programmes, community newspapers, and various Sikh institutions. It is difficult to figure out whether Brahminization is being done intentionally or ignorantly. The Sikhs, who are introducing Brahminism in Sikhism, are called Brahminized Sikhs in this paper.⁵

The first sign of Brahminization of Sikhism in Canada is reflected in the popularization of a new term, *gurughar*, for gurdwara by these Brahminized Sikhs. In almost all Punjabi newspapers and in gurdwaras' speeches the word *gurughar* is used. *Gurughar* does not convey the message as is given in gurdwara (5). Gurdwara is a modified version of Guru *dwara* used by Guru Nanak in his *bani* where its meanings have been explained (1,5).

There have always been fights amongst various groups to take

over the control of the gurdwaras. After Operation Blue Star in 1984, it became more important for certain groups of Sikhs to have an absolute control over the gurdwara administration than any other service to Sikhism. Consequently, fights over control of gurdwaras were intensified. However, the biggest attraction for certain Sikhs to have an absolute control over the administration of a gurdwara in their hands, is to control the huge funds offered by devout Sikhs. Therefore, brandishing of swords and presence of police are not uncommon scenes inside and outside gurdwaras in Canada, U.S.A., Europe, U.K. and other countries. Because of the fights among various groups to take over the control of the management of gurdwaras, many cases of litigation have been registered in the courts (5). S. Saran Singh, Editor of the *Sikh Review*, Calcutta puts the fighting in gurdwaras in a nutshell as follows (A note in ref. # 13): "There has been a growing tendency among office bearers of gurdwara management everywhere to play power politics. Wrangling over control of gurdwaras' funds is not uncommon. Entrenched members consider the gurdwara property as their fiefdom and adopt unethical practices to retain control, resulting, sometimes, in unseemly civil and criminal litigation."

In some gurdwaras nobody except *amritdharis* can recite the AGGS, speak from the dais, or even distribute *parsad* or *langar*. However, according to *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Sikh code of conduct), published by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee (SGPC), any Sikh has the right to do that. Unfortunately, the definition of a Sikh given in the *Rahit Maryada* is not understood properly by these Brahminized Sikhs. (For more discussion on definition of a Sikh see ref. # 4). The above action of the *amritdharis* is just an equivalent to *Brahminism* according to which only *Brahmins* can recite Vedas or *mantras* to non *Brahmins*. Some *amritdharis* even do not eat any thing, if prepared or served by a non-*amritdhari*. It appears that such *amritdharis* (Brahminized Sikhs) look at other Sikhs as equivalent to the *sudras* (low caste). They are worse than the *Brahmins* because at least *Brahmins* eat *sarahds* or other *bhojans* from non-*Brahmins* without any hesitation (5). Tension between *amritdharis* and Sikhs is increasing everyday in gurdwaras since the 1984 events in the Punjab and other places in India. Recently, a direct conflict between Sikhs and *amaritdharis* happened in Surrey gurdwara, BC on the appointment of *amritdharis* at the positions of President and Secretary General of the

gurdwara (6). It was also mentioned that the new proposed conditions, to be *amritdhari* for the President and the Secretary General, were rejected by the court. Until and unless the gurdwaras are brought under one umbrella organization and the new *Rahit Maryada* (to be formulated as discussed later), it will not be possible to contain the fightings in gurdwaras.

SIKH ORGANIZATIONS

Keeping in view the above situation of gurdwaras, there is a direct need of an umbrella organization of the Sikhs in Canada and other countries. This should look after proper functioning of gurdwaras, proper use of funds for propagation of Sikhism through seminars, television, publication of books, establishment of educational institutions and Sikh Chairs in the Universities, preaching of Sikhism in its real perspective, popularizing the Sikh heritage, etc. "Taking necessary steps to bring the Sikh Gurdwaras under a single system of administration with a view to running them according to the basic Sikh forms and to pool their resources for the propagation of Sikhism on a wider and more impressive scale", was also recognized in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution on October 16th and 17th, 1973 (11). Thus, an idea to formulate such a Sikh organization originated in the minds of the Sikhs of Canada during 1980s (8). The attack by the Indian Army on the Akal Takht and the carnage of the Sikhs in Delhi and other parts of India during June and November 1984, respectively, accelerated the process and many Sikh organizations mushroomed in Canada. However, none of these organizations has succeeded to bring all the gurdwaras of Canada under one code or achieve any improvements in the gurdwaras' administration.

Recently formation of another organization, "Ontario Gurdwara Management Board" (OGMB), was proposed by the Gurdwara Reform Committee in 1992 to put at least the gurdwaras of Ontario under one administration (9). The constitution of OGMB has been examined by the Jathedar of Akal Takht, Professor Manjit Singh and his 7-member advisory committee of scholars; Manjit Singh Calcutta, Secretary SGPC, Amritsar; and also by a dozen more scholars from India and Canada.

All the above scholars and authorities on Sikhism have accepted the constitution in general and appreciated the formation of

such an organization under the control of the *Panj Piyare* and the supremacy of the Akal Takht (in ref. # 9). But nobody has given any serious thought to look into the consistency and the validity of the constitution from a legal point of view and the implications of applying the *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (drafted by scholars of 1930s and 40s) for the highly advanced civilization of the Space Age and Computer Age. In fact, the present society is fast moving towards the evolution of a new civilization during the 21st century. Only two scholars, Dr Suba Singh of Khalsa College, Amritsar and S. Saran Singh, IAS, Editor of *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta have pointed out to look into the constitution legally and on the lines similar to that of SGPC (in ref. # 9). In this constitution, almost absolute powers have been entrusted to the *Panj Piyare* whose qualifications are; to be *amritdharis* at least for five years without any academic qualification. The other condition for them is that they should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of Sikhism without mentioning what would be the criteria to evaluate this qualification. And the selection is based on picking up the names at random — *parchi* system, i.e., a lottery system or a gambling system. This system of selecting a person for administration purposes in a advanced civilized society is not acceptable, although Dr Pritam Singh and S. Gurdev Singh Sangha have written very strongly in the favour of the *parchi* system (in ref. # 9). There is almost no freedom of speech in the gurdwaras in this constitution.

Moreover, the *Sikh Rahit Maryada*, published by SGPC in 1945, should be taken seriously by the Sikhs. Because proper interpretation of the code is most important before it is applied. If it is a code then it must be written like a code and should be interpreted as a code (Code = a systematic statement of a body of law; especially: one given statutory force). Since it is considered as a statute it ought to be free from redundancies and uncertainties, and must not be capable of being understood in two or more possible senses. But it is not so with the present *Sikh Rahit Maryada*.

POLITICAL POSITION

Beside being good business peoples, professors, teachers, scientists, medical doctors, technologists, and labourers, the Canadian Sikhs are becoming active in the politics of their new homeland, Canada. Moe Sihota was a minister and Ujjal Dosanjh and Harry Lalli

are MLAs in the government of BC. Dr Gulzar Cheema is MLA in Manitoba. Gurbax Singh Malhi and Herb Dhaliwal are MP's from Toronto area. Beside the active participation on common Canadian issues, Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi speaks in the House of Commons to make the Members of Parliament and the Senators and the Canadians understand Sikhs and Sikhism. This year he celebrated the Annual Baisakhi Day (the Sikh Nation's Birthday) in a beautiful Commonwealth Room below the Peace Tower, which was attended by Prime Minister Jean Chretien, House Leader and Solicitor General Herb Gray, Finance Minister Paul Martin, Minister of Immigration Sergio Marchi, Senators and 30 members of Parliament, and the Punjabi Media of Canada. It is for the first time in the history of Canada that a turbaned Sikh is a member of Parliament.

BEYOND 2000

In the past, the Mughals tried to liquidate the Sikhs but failed. Instead, the Sikhs emerged as a strong political force (Sikh Empire 1799-1849) in the North Western part of the Indian subcontinent. But there has been continuous degeneration after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839. Nevertheless, the attack by the Indian Army on the Akal Takht and the general carnage of the Sikhs in India, especially in Delhi, during 1984 paved the way for the evolution of a new leadership of the Sikhs and to look into Sikhism in the light of the modern political situation and the present advances in the civilization by the new discoveries of science.

Sikh identity at has been clearly defined. Unfortunately, however, some misguided young Sikhs are moving away from it in Canada as well as in India. A young Sikh Canadian, Gurpreet Kaur Rana (in ref. # 2) feels as follows: "If the future of the Sikh community is to be found in the beliefs and the actions of Sikh youth, then the future of the Sikh Community as it enters the 21st century is assuredly unclear". On the other hand, Sutantar Singh (in ref. # 2) expressed his view as follows: "Enthusiasts, through their prism, foresee the spread of Sikhism even though there is no strong mechanism to propagate Sikhism". However, I foresee a very good future of Sikhism beyond 2000 provided it is portrayed scientifically and logically based on *Gurbani* incorporated in the AGGS by the Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun and the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, and there is free deliberation of *Gurbani* in the gurdwaras (3, 4, 5).

To achieve the above objectives, a strong collaboration between the SGPC and an Advisory Board comprising Sikh intelligentsia at the national and international levels having expertise in *Gurbani*, Sikh- and other history, various sciences, law, administration, languages, psychology, etc., under the aegis of the Akal Takht, is needed. This body should formulate a new code of conduct and a constitution for an International Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (IGPC), each for Canada, USA, UK, and other countries. This body of experts should also write a model book, "Principles of Sikhism" based on a scientific and logical analysis of *Gurbani* ignoring unauthentic ancient writings and mythical works. Both the projects should be ready before the celebration of the 300th Birthday Anniversary of the Sikh Nation in 1999 for the guidance of the future Sikh generations beyond 2000. The Akal Takht should release this model book and also bless the new IGPC for Canada and other countries on the auspicious day of the 300th Birthday Anniversary of the Sikh Nation.

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(Abbreviations: AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib, M. = Mahla, p. = page)

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ACADEMIC CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr Jasbir Singh Mann

I. SIKH IDENTITY

The essential doctrines of a religion determine its identity. Sikh identity can be found only in its primary source, Aad Guru Granth Sahib and the history of the Guru period (1469-1708). No identity of Sikh religion can be based on secondary sources. Political ups and downs entered Sikh history only after 1708 when attempts were made to diffuse the Sikh identity. But, as Aad Guru Granth Sahib is the base of Sikhism, revivalists were able to restore its true identity. Phenomenal studies cannot determine the identity of the Sikh religion, as it is Numinous based. Many politically oriented/intentional writers are still attacking the independent Sikh identity. It is a challenge for Sikh scholars of the next century to continue propagating the Sikh religious identity based on the spiritual experience of its prophets, their concept of One God, and their goal to achieve socio-political justice.¹

II. EVIDENCE OF RECORDED REVELATION

The Sikh religion is the only major religion of the world, which has its recorded revelation available and authenticated in the form of Kartarpuri Bir. Some missionaries are attacking its authenticity. Sikh scholars in the 21st century must continue their efforts to confront any future controversies regarding Kartarpuri Bir.²

III. PUNJAB PROBLEM

The Congress leaders, prior to 1947, made many promises to the Sikhs to the effect that after the Britishers leave India, they would have a glow of freedom in North India. After 1947, all such commitments were violated. Although there is enough academic evidence available to show that the Punjab problem is an economic and political problem, it is being dubbed as a problem of fundamentalism. Such scholars usually say "Fundamentalism among the Sikhs today is apparently the basic cause of current political unrest in India..... It is

primarily a movement of resistance and a universe characterized by incoherence and disorder". There is no evidence to support this contention, and the hard political and economic problems of the Punjab are not being presented in their proper perspective. This academic challenge for Sikh scholars will continue into the next century. Sikh scholars must accept this challenge, and highlight the economic and political problems in Punjab to the global community.³

IV. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In recent years, attempts have been made to study the Sikh Scripture through Judaeo-Christian approaches, which are inapplicable to the Sikh Scripture. Such attempts are being made to diffuse the originality of the revelatory nature of the Sikh Scripture. By definition, textual analysis means "to find the original". Sikhs have the original scripture, so textual analysis does not apply to Aad Guru Granth Sahib. System of textual, or redaction analysis is also inapplicable to the Sikh Scripture, as Guru Arjun compiled and authenticated the Sikh Scripture in order to avoid any confusion. He established the famous doctrine of *Kachi* vs. *Pakki* or *Sachi bani* thereby, rendering all other manuscript irrelevant whether written before or after 1604. It is a very serious challenge for the 21st century Sikh scholars to continue to promote the Sikh doctrine of *Kachi* vs. *Sachi bani*.⁴

V. SIKHISM: RELIGION OF NUMINA — NOT PHENOMENA

Numinous experience is inherent in Fries's *Ahndung* (longing), Schleiermacher's *Feeling*, Kant's *Things in Themselves* (noumena) and Kapur Singh's *Antithesis of phenomena*. It stands for the holy minus its moral factor and without any rational aspect. It is irreducible to any other factor. Numinous consciousness involves shaking fear or repulsion, and an element of powerful fascination. It can only be understood by "ideograms", i.e., not through logic, but only symbolically. The core of religious experience is inherent in the awareness of non-moral holiness as a category of value. This category of value is called numina. Numina means a spiritual experience of reality peculiar to religion. The numinous experience is the core and base of Sikh religion and its ingredients, i.e., religiously sensitive mind in relation to his/her apprehension of himself/herself and universe around him/her. The ultimate reality is not comprehensible through the sensory motor perceptions and speculations. Sikhism is a religion

of *Naam* (neumin), which is asserted through 30,000 hymns of the Sikh Scripture through revealed statements, literary similes and allusions. *Naam* is God and God is *Naam*, and the practice of religion revolves around *Naam*. The Sikh religious thought cannot be interpreted through any phenomenal process. *Naam* is timeless. Recently, an attempt has been made to dub Aad Guru Granth Sahib as a 16th century philosophy, which should be changed to fit the present post technical and capitalistic society of the 20th century. One must understand that Aad Guru Granth Sahib is *Shabad* Guru and a direct revelation which cannot be changed. The man of technical and capitalistic era of the 20th century has the same wicked or worse mind than 16th century human beings had. Only the numinous nature of Sikh philosophy can change this man and not the egoistic man of phenomenal society, and *vice versa*. Such challenges to Sikh philosophy will continue in the 21st century and Sikh scholars must answer them appropriately.⁵

VI. DASAM GRANTH AND OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES

The primary source for study of Sikh religion and its identity is Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Any study based on secondary sources alone, will not be appropriate, and can create confusion. Sikhs must work very hard to find the history, authorship, and internal consistency of such secondary sources and an appropriate perspective before they can be used for Sikh studies. This issue is highly sensitive and needs meticulous handling. This is the most challenging academic issue, which Sikh scholars of the 21st century must face.⁶

VII. SIKH BHAKTI VS. HINDU BHAKTI

The *miri-piri* concept of Sikhism is unique. It started with Guru Nanak, and was given a more visible expression by Guru Hargobind. Many academics are creating confusion by mixing the Sikh *Bhakti* and the Hindu *Bhakti*. Sikh *Bhakti* is an active *Bhakti*, while Hindu *Bhakti* is passive. The concept of *Shakti* and *Bhakti* cannot be compared with the *miri-piri* concept. Some scholars fail to see the difference, and confuse Sikhism with the *Bhakti* movement. This exercise seems to be diffusing the independent identity of the Sikh religion. It is a great challenge for Sikh scholars in the 21st century to put Sikh *Bhakti* and Hindu *Bhakti* in appropriate perspective.^{7,8}

VIII. SIKH WORLD-VIEW

Most of the higher religions have either become dichotomous, or are withdrawing from the main fields of social responsibility, and human reason feels frustrated. Sikh Gurus express a comprehensive world-view of hope and eternal relevance. Sikhism is universal in its approach, always anxious and willing to co-operate with those who aim at harmony and well being of man. Guru Nanak proclaimed that his mission was to steer man across the turbulent sea of life with the help of other godmen. This is included in the everyday prayer of the Sikhs. "May God Bless all Mankind." Sikh scholars in the 21st century must continue to propagate this basic Sikh world-view towards humanity.⁹

IX. IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF AKAL TAKHT

Ideological challenge is not uncommon in the history of religious thought. In fact, it may even be desirable for better understanding of religious doctrines, since it helps the adherents to affirm their faith. But no religion can run its affairs until there is a strong central authority to deal with such challenges. Akal Takht (worldwide) and SPGC (India) are the only custodians of Sikhism. Sikh masses need to be educated about the importance and significance of Akal Takht. A lot of confusion is being created about the institution of Akal Takht these days. It is the concensus of the Sikh community, especially those who have moved away from India, that in order to save Sikhism from going the protestant way, like Christianity, there is an immediate need to set up an office of the Akal Takht in the west, so that the Sikh institutions in the west also can come under the control of Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar. There is a need to evolve a system/secretariat/senate under Akal Takht and to form a think tank to advise the custodians regarding religious, academic, social, and political day to day problems of the Sikhs in India and abroad. The Sikh perspective on different issues cannot be put under the rug anymore. It is a great challenge that must be accepted by Sikh intellectuals and clergy.¹⁰

X. GURU GRANTH SAHIB AS LIVING GURU

Personal guruship was ended by the Tenth Guru after finalizing the Sikh mission and sanctifying and passing succession to Guru Granth Sahib as future living Guru of the Sikhs. He was very clear that no human guru was to be acknowledged by the Sikhs after 1708. There

is plenty of historical evidence which endorses the above significant Sikh doctrine. In spite of this, many *Dehdhari* gurus and *sants* are proliferating in India and abroad supported by political enemies of the Sikhs. The present day holders of the Sikh chairs in Western Universities are trying to confuse such a significant Sikh doctrine of Guru *manyo Granth*, by the Tenth Guru in 1708. Such attempts will be continued in the next centuries. It is a great challenge for Sikh scholars in the next century to preserve such historically proven doctrines and to stop the misleading propaganda of *Sant Samaj* and *Dehdhari* gurus.
11,12

XI. UNIVERSITY DISSERTATIONS

A lot of research has been going on in Western Universities, e.g., Dr Oberoi's Ph.D. from Australian National University in 1987; Dr Gurinder Mann from Columbia in 1993, "Making of Sikh Scripture"; and Lou Fennech from Toronto in 1995, "Tradition of Sikh Martyrdom". All the above Ph.D. dissertations have been restricted from the public. Nobody is objecting to any research, but ill-motivated and unethical work needs to be condemned. If future generations read the wrong books, they will get the wrong answers. It is a great challenge for mainstream Sikh scholars in the 21st century to continue closely evaluating such research and respond to them in a proper perspective.

In my opinion, the above topics are the major academic challenges which mainstream Sikh scholars must face. If these are not responded to in accordance with the doctrines established in Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib, they will affect the psyche of the 20 million Sikhs at large, who follow and pray before Aad Guru Granth Sahib in their homes and gurdwaras daily. Sikhs living in India and Punjab may get away with some of the problems, as they are living in the area where Sikhism was born. Sikhs who have migrated out of India cannot escape the deleterious effects of such wrong literature, because the coming generation may not be able to visit Punjab. If they want to find their great heritage, they can only consult the available literature. If they read the wrong books, they will get the wrong answers and will start doubting the authenticity and integrity of our living Guru (Guru Granth Sahib), and the great heritage given to us by the Gurus. The above academic issues are great challenges for Sikh scholars in the 21st century. We hope Sikh scholars will face such challenges and ensure for the Sikh religion a proper recognition among other major world religions.

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SIKHISM: PATTERNS OF SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

Dr N. Muthumohan

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of justice is a late-comer to philosophy and religion. A modern sociologist wonders "how recent and belated is the development of the idea of equality" in human thought (Louis Dumont, 1980:11). For centuries, humanity has believed that inequality is the law of life. The greatest philosophers of ancient Greece, for example, did not even suspect that a philosophy could be produced keeping in mind the interests of the slaves. Greek philosophy basically was the philosophy of the slave-owners and their elite. We also know the history of Christianity, which once emerged as the religion of slaves, soon transformed itself to serve as the ideology of medieval feudalism and later of colonialism. The Indian scene was not any better than its European counterpart. It was even worse. From the most ancient recorded history of India, one finds that social inequality has been given religious sanction. India is considered as a classical society of Homo Hierarchicus. Indian society is animated by the spirit of hierarchy which permeates every sphere of life from family to state, and from religion to metaphysics. Andre Beteille maintains, "Caste has not only been a very durable feature of Indian society, but its influence has reached into every sphere of its composite structure" (1987:58). He continues, "Indian society has come to signify not just inequality, but inequality of the most rigid and uncompromising kind" (1987:34).

Scholars have already mentioned that injustice has been maintained in Hindu ideology with the help of certain strategies of exclusion and oppression such as *Varnashramadharma*, theories of *karma*, pollution, *guna*, etc. However, it is often conceived that the metaphysics and theology of Hinduism are innocent of the caste hierarchy existing at the social level. It is perceived that metaphysics as a discipline of Transcendental Reality is unaware of social injustice. The present article is intended to explore the opposite. It tries to assert the intimate and necessary relations between metaphysics and justice

or injustice. Sikhism in this context appears to be a major indigenous attempt to propose an alternative metaphysics to the existing metaphysics of injustice. This paper identifies Sikhism as an integrated system of metaphysics and social philosophy together, permeated by the idea of justice.

II. METAPHYSICS AND INJUSTICE

Above all, mention must be made on the Vedic line of thinking, starting from the Upanishads to Sankara's Advaita, which gradually moves towards a dichotomised perception of reality into *Brahman* and *atman*, at one end, and *maya* at the other end, distinctly defined and counterpoised, parallel to and in tune with the historical process of formation and consolidation of *vamas* and castes in India. We do not propose a one-to-one deterministic relationship between the conceptual apparatus of Vedantic philosophy and the social structure prevalent in India. The inter-relationship is very complex, and subtle arguments are available to substantiate the Vedantic thinking without relating it directly to the social system. However, the pattern of thought and the logic of exclusion are strikingly similar between the making of metaphysics and that of the caste system. Vedanta seeks to locate the supreme idea of *Brahman* beyond and outside the pale of actual life, which it characterises as *maya* or illusion. *Brahman* is reached only after discriminating the empirical and social life (*Neti, Neti, Nirprapanca, Nirguna, Nirakara*, etc.). The relation between the reality of *Brahman* and earthly life is binary, hierarchical and discriminative. Even when *maya* does not mean absolute nothingness according to the subtle arguments of Advaita philosophers, it is the lower reality, less real like a dream which is to be overpowered, dominated and controlled. The latter understanding is more meaningful in the context of our present discussion, as it means a relationship of power, domination and exclusion between the concepts of *Brahman* and the world. It is the same relationship of power, domination and exclusion that characterises the caste hierarchy. One cannot avoid the conclusion that "Vedanta was the philosophical-cum-religious binding force of *chaturvarnya*, and consequently, in the course of time, of ramification into innumerable castes.... This inter-relation is the key to a sober objective assessment of Vedanta" (Sardesai, 1976:120). The quoted author rightly points out that "Broadly speaking, the develop-

ment of the concepts of the *Brahman* and *atman*, the central theme of Vedanta and the development of *chaturvarnya* go hand in hand" (Ibid:122).

The Vedantic characterisation of external world as *maya* also inculcates a negative attitude to nature, makes nature into raw-material, an unanimated '*phusis*', a mere object, the other, with which man is allowed to have any amount of exploitative relation. In this sense, it is an anti-environmental eco-destructive system of thought. The attitude to nature is further extrapolated to people involved in physical labour and they are treated as raw material or instruments in relation to the supreme reality of *Brahman*. It is no wonder that in corroboration to this type of philosophy, the *vama* ethics evaluates the people of physical labour as low, impure and polluted. It must be remembered here that the Vedantic idea of *Brahman* does not include in itself any moment of activity or dynamism. Its characterisation of *nirguna*, attributes change and activity only to the *mayic*, material world. The *Swarupa* of *Brahman* — *Sat Chitananda*, i.e., pure reality, pure consciousness and pure bliss —, too, excludes any activity from the realm of *Brahman*. *Karma*, even in its best sense of activity, belongs to the *maya*-world. Not only material activity but also intellectual activity or logical thought does not deserve any support in Vedantic philosophy. "Since, even thought and reason are human and hence a material faculty, *ipso facto*, *Brahman* is beyond cognisance by reason or thought as well. It is *acintya*, *ajneya*, etc. (Sardesai, 1976:122). However, this is not only an epistemological issue. Ontologically, this means that the *Brahman*-reality cannot be changed by any means, material or intellectual. This shuts down all possibilities to transform the reality by human efforts. *Brahman* is allowed to rule over the world in peace, completely insured from any attack from below. Louis Dumont confirms this, "What is characteristic of the Indian order, with a division of labour based upon the fundamental religious values (i.e., caste system), is a complete differentiation between the spiritual and the temporal" (1980:278). Vedanta postulates two absolutely disconnected levels of being, *Paramarthika* and *Vyavakarika*.

The above discussion shows clearly the intimate relation between Vedanta metaphysics and the caste ordering of society. We come to the conclusion that the dichotomy of *Brahman* and *maya* is the philosophical expression of the social hierarchy of *varnas* or castes.

The conceptually made hierarchy between *Brahman* and *maya* is a model to the social classificatory system of castes, and *vice versa*.

In a similar vein, we want to assert the inseparable link between the Sikh metaphysics and the Sikh ideal of social justice. However, by way of preparing the ground for it, let us digress to register the sensitivity of the Sikh Gurus to social injustice.

III. SENSITIVITY OF SIKH GURUS TO SOCIAL INJUSTICE

The Sikh Gurus were very sensitive to the social evils of their days. Sikhism is a grand response to the social inequalities and oppression, found expressed in and caused by the prevailing caste system, despotism of political rulers, hypocrisy of religious leaders and ascetics, and rigidity of rituals and penances, preached and practised in place of true religion.

Guru Amar Das indicates that a myriad errors flow out of caste pride (Harbans Singh, 1968:100). Guru Nanak simply identifies himself with the lowest of the low castes and asks "What have I got to do with high castes"? (Ibid: 100). Kabir addresses the Brahmin, the leader of the caste system,

"Say, O *Pandit*, when were the Brahmins created?
Do not waste thy life by proclaiming thy Brahminhood.
If thou art a Brahmin, born of a Brahmin woman,
Why hast thou not come through another way?
How art thou a Brahmin? How am I a *Sudra*?
How am I blood? How art thou milk?"

(S.S. Kohli, 1961:171)

Guru Nanak's religious mind encaptures the basic problems of human existence in the following manner:

"The greatest of all sufferings is separation from God
Another is suffering of hunger and poverty
Next is the suffering from the tyrant-aggressor".

SGGS, p. 1256

The religious suffering of Guru Nanak is the actual sufferings of the people whom he passionately loved, and it is also an expression of the search into the ultimate questions of existence. The compassionate heart of the great Guru cries out loudly and even dares to

question its own master:

"The people wailed in their agony of suffering —
 Didst Thou feel no compassion for them?
 If a powerful foe molests one equally powerful
 Little would be there to complain.
 But if a ferocious tiger falls upon a herd of kine
 Then the Master be called to account"!

SGGS, p. 360

Possibly, this was the moment of Truth, moment of need for a revelation, birth of a new religion, religion of a new type. Guru Nanak's compassion for the weak, yearning for justice and his commitment to God, all these fuse together at this moment. This comes to explain the fact of an alternative metaphysics of justice and equality which goes with the name of Sikhism.

IV. SIKHISM: AN ALTERNATIVE METAPHYSICS

Sikhism, necessarily makes a radical departure from the classical Indian metaphysics. Besides the revelatory and mystic roots of origination of Sikh thought, it was also conditioned by, as we have seen, the sensitivity of the Sikh Gurus to the contemporaneous social situations. Sikh metaphysics has a direct and immediate bearing on Sikh commitment to social justice. Dharam Singh points out, "The metaphysical doctrine of Sikh theology, in fact, forms the basis of the Sikh social thought from where it gets its emergence as well as sustenance. The stress on moral and ethical values in social and political life has been so intimately intertwined with the religious thought, that any endeavour to isolate them would lead to the disintegration of the whole fabric" (1994:326).

Sikhism, very fundamentally repudiates the dichotomised perception of reality, which now in Sikhism is considered as an uninterrupted continuum of God, man and the world. The Sikh *mul mantra* begins with the numeral one — *IK* — which means the oneness and unity of reality and equality of all its moments. Guru Amar Das says:

"Holy is the Lord, ever holy, holy all created forms".

SGGS, p. 1131

And no discrimination can be attributed to any part of the

reality.

"He who fashioned our self, life and body,
And created us, feels for us too".

SGGS, p. 1137

Nirbhai Singh maintains, "In Sikhism, the reality is a nondual systematic unity which manifests itself as hierarchical and coherent dimensions of the reality" (1990:61). Here, the term hierarchy does not mean the social hierarchy of castes. Guru Nanak leaves no doubt regarding the equality of human beings:

"God looks upon all mortals with the same eye and
deems them as equal".

SGGS, p. 730

Therefore, the term 'hierarchical' here means "all grades of creation — eggborn, mammals, perspiration-born, earth-born" (SGGS, p.1109), without any discriminative attitude to any one of them. Sikhism forwards a holistic, integrative monotheism which forms the basis for its perception of cosmological and social order. In this order of things, the body is not discriminated, the world is not despised and matter is not condemned. Everything is permeated by the idea of God. "All existence is interpenetrating" says Guru Nanak (SGGS, p. 596). Guru Arjun asserts:

"The Creator's holy name, His Truth everywhere pervasive.
No spot of Him is emptied; each vessel He fills".

SGGS, p. 523

The Sikh Gurus repeatedly emphasize that the world is true, real, wonderful, holy and united with God. The discriminative, dichotomised perception of reality is completely overcome here, giving way to an egalitarian and just order of things. We call it the metaphysics of justice.

Sikh metaphysics is not logocentric as it is found in Vedantic thought. Sikhism is a grand dialogue and dialectics of God and world, spirituality and earthliness, where the world and earthliness themselves are not distinctly cut away from God and spirituality. It is not the dialectics of opposites as it is found in Hegelian philosophy. It is the dialectics of the differing entities, however, organically united. The

dialectics of opposites cannot avoid giving equal importance to destruction, whereas in Sikh dialectics the creative moment is predominant. "Sikhism does not accept the ultimate dichotomy of matter and spirit" says Kapur Singh (1993:138) and further quotes, "the subtle and the gross are, in fact, identical" (Idid: 95)

Sikh ontology, in this regard, has the support of Sikh epistemology. The dichotomy of *Brahman* and *maya* is conditioned by the preference of Vedanta to analytical episteme that it seeks to perceive entities in a distinctly clear, unconnected and categorical form. Vedanta also follows a regressive method to reach the *Swarupa* of *Brahman*, gradually discriminating and bracketing out everything earthly. Sikh epistemology contrarily is synthetic, integrative and holistic. From the central idea of God, it spreads out to encompass man, world, and the entire existence.

The Sikh conception of Reality is analogised to the structure of a family. Consequently, all the moments of reality are related with one another by familial bonds.

"The air is the Guru; water our father,
and the great earth our mother.

Days and nights are our two nurses, male and female,
who set the world a playing".

SGGS, p. 8

Nature is in familial relation with man. This excludes any unjust and eco-destructive relation to nature. The relation between God and man is metaphorised to the love and separation between the bride and her spouse. It is interesting to notice that the bride's maternal household, which she leaves to unite with her husband is compared to the world.

"In the parents' home, the world, by the Word has the self-female
acquired respect —

Thus in the husband's home, the hereafter, has she found favour.
Saith Nanak: As the Holy Preceptor union to her has granted,
Eliminated is abject dependence on the world."

SGGS, p. 1111, (Also see: SGGS, pp. 355, 357, 370, 371)

The holistic view of reality is consistently saved here. The world is not despised but only the abject dependence on the world.

Metaphorically, the world is not alien to man but it is only the parental home of man. It is within the limits of familial structure, the dialectics of God, world and man is played. It must be mentioned here that, within a family, love binds every member of the family. No member is discriminated, and no one is the instrument at the hands of the other. In the Sikh conception of reality, family has been taken as the model for equality, love and justice.

V. CASTE, RENUNCIATION, FAMILY AND KHALSA

The metaphor of family preferred in Sikhism brings to our discussion its place in comparison to other forms of living available in Indian tradition. The pre-Sikh period of Indian history has evolved out predominantly two patterns of living, i) the caste pattern, ii) the way of living of a renouncer. The caste pattern of living, as we have seen, is permeated by the principles of hierarchy, fragmentation and discrimination. Every member of society is born and accommodated in a caste, is taught to have a particular attitude towards other castes. This is rigorously guarded by rituals, rites, *dharma*s and by religion. The inequality is inborn in this pattern of living. It is these principles of hierarchy, inequality, etc., that were found confirmed by the Hindu metaphysics also.

On the other hand, Indian tradition has also offered another pattern of living — renunciation — the way of life of an ascetic. The ascetic ideal as such was worked out mostly by the heterodox traditions like *Ajzeevika*, Jainism, Buddhism, etc. However, it was imported into and sanscriticised by the Brahmanic tradition as one of the four *ashramas*. Some of the modern sociologists are inclined to see in the institution of renunciation, a counter-pattern of living in preference to and in opposition to the caste-hierarchical pattern, as the ascetic is the one who renounces his 'social' role of being the member of a caste and prefers to go out of the given system. Thus, renunciation has come to be seen as the opposite of caste pattern of living.

The already quoted sociologist Louis Dumont describes the history of formation of the opposition between caste and renunciation in the following manner: "The historical transition can be represented schematically as a two-fold movement. On the one hand, society, under the aegis of the Brahman, was to become more and more settled into categories of strict interdependence, having the pure and impure as

their axis (i.e., the caste system). On the other hand, the individualistic philosopher of the previous age was to become a renouncer, Hindu or heterodox" (1980: 186). Romila Thapar too identifies counter-caste initiative in renunciation (1984-63-104).

Coming back to the discussion of Sikhism, one finds that the Sikh ideal of society excludes both the above said ways of living — caste and renunciation. The Sikh critique of casteism has been enunciated above in this article. And its criticism of renunciation, too, is well known. However, objectively, the renunciative model of opposition is highly abstract, theoretical and idealistic. As Louis Dumont himself indicates, the renunciative ideal hides its subtle individualism behind its universalism. Besides, renunciation pathetically fails to make any material of intellectual initiative against the caste system, as by its own definition, renunciation is also renunciation of discursive thought and praxis. Ultimately, renunciation's opposition to caste system is illusory and it ends in no more than a passive escape from the social reality of caste. In this sense, the idea of justice, if any, of a renouncer, too, is illusory, and abstract. It is on these valid grounds that Sikhism repudiates the institution of renunciation.

Negating the historical models based either on hierarchy and fragmentation or on individualism and inaction, Sikhism proposes the alternative that is constructed by the principles of holism (critique of *haumai*), equality (critique of caste) and dynamism (critique of renunciation). At one level, the Sikh Gurus land on family as a metaphor of their social ideal. However, the ideals of the Sikh Gurus find their completion and fulfilment in the *Khalsa*.

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APPLICATION OF HINDU LAW TO THE SIKHS

Kashmir Singh

All laws are uniformly applicable to all Indians, irrespective of their religion, race, caste, descent or place of birth. But the area of family law or personal law constitutes an exception to this general rule, although uniformity¹ prevails to some extent in this area also. The personal law applicable to a person is determined by his membership of the religious community to which he belongs. Different religious communities are governed by different personal laws. The British legacy of community-wise personal laws has been retained in the Republic of India.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Personal laws are viewed as part of religion and as religious laws. But, the freedom of religion guaranteed in the Indian Constitution,² in no way, prohibits the regulation of personal laws by the state. While guaranteeing the freedom of religion, the Constitution subjected it to public order, morality and health. It also authorised the state to regulate secular activity which may be associated with religious practices, and also to provide for social welfare and reform. Entry 5 in list II of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution authorises the central and state legislatures to make laws on marriage and divorce, infant and minors, adoption, wills, intestacy and succession, joint family, partition, all matters in respect of which parties in judicial proceedings, immediately before the commencement of the Constitution, were subject to their laws. Thus, the Union Parliament and state legislatures are empowered to enact, amend, alter or repeal the personal laws in whole or in part.³

Several High Courts⁴ have held that the State is competent to deal with personal law of any community without violating any provision of the Constitution. Article 372 (1) of the Constitution also allowed the continuation of existing laws, unless amended or repealed by the competent legislature. Thus, all the religious groups continued

to be governed by the personal laws based on their religions and customs till those were amended. According to Article 44, 'The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India'. It is held to be an unequivocal mandate of the Constitution which seeks to introduce a uniform personal law. This Article is based on the concept, "that there is no necessary relation between religion and personal law in a civilised society. Article 25 guarantees religious freedom whereas Art. 44 seeks to divest religion from social relations and personal law."⁵

HINDU LAW

Hindu Law is the law of *Smritis*, as expounded in the Sanskrit commentaries and Digests, which is now modified and supplemented by custom and legislation. As regards the (old) Hindu Law, the Madras High Court observed:

"What is ordinarily understood as Hindu Law is not like a customary law of the country like common law of England. Neither it is a statute law in the sense that some kind of legislature framed the law and enforced its acceptance by the people. Hindu law, as is commonly understood, is a set of rules contained in several Sanskrit books which the Sanskritists consider as books of authority on the law governing the Hindus."⁶

The greater part of the Hindu Law was not in tune with the times. For example, prior to independence, the Hindus were governed by old Hindu Law of marriage. The aspersion that Hindus were polygamous, married without their personal consent and for money, and did not allow divorce, was used to demonstrate how unfit they were for the modern world and hence for independence.⁷

The fundamentalists viewed Hindu Law as of divine origin, and, therefore, sacrosanct and inviolable. The condification of Hindu Law was not considered as a dream even of distant future. It was thought to be something which was impossible, and not feasible. An Expert⁸ commented in 1878:

"The age of miracles has passed, and I hardly expect to see a Code of Hindu Law which shall satisfy a trader and an agriculturist, the Punjabi and the Bengali, the *pundits* of Benaras and Rameswaram, of Amritsar and of Poona. But, I can easily

imagine a very beautiful and specious code, which should produce much more dissatisfaction and expense than the law as at present administered."

However, some reformers continued to plead for amendment in it by legislation. Some minor amendments were made by the legislature, but enlightened Hindus wanted the major part of it to be amended.

The Government of India responded to the demand of reformers by constituting a Hindu Law Committee in 1941 under the chairmanship of Sir B.N. Rau, a former Judge of the International Court of Justice. The codification of Hindu Law was bitterly opposed by orthodox elements⁹ in the Hindu society and even by some learned and sober people.¹⁰ But, a few enlightened Hindus¹¹ supported the move. The Sikhs also opposed the Hindu Code Bill. Under the shadow of severe criticism and stiff opposition, the Nehru Government split up the bill into four and the Hindu Marriage Act was passed in 1955, and the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act were passed in 1956. About eighty six percent of the Indian population including the Sikhs is governed by these 'Hindu' enactments. It is in partial fulfilment of the constitutional mandate to secure a uniform civil code,¹² and also to modernise the Hindu Law, that the Parliament enacted a uniform code of personal laws for the followers of all the faiths of Indian origin under the name of Hindu Laws in 1955-56.

LAW APPLICABLE TO THE SIKHS

Sikhism is a modern religion with progressive and scientific outlook. It had rejected ritualism, orthodoxy and formalism. Sikhism does not prescribe any civil code which might become outdated after some time. According to a revered Sikh scholar and philosopher, "Sikhism has no corpus of civil law of divine origin."¹³ Had there been a divine law, it could not have been changed by any one, and it would have been sacrosanct, inviolable and immutable. It shows the far-sightedness of the founders of Sikhism that Sikhs are not put into any awkward situation of following any outdated law unlike the followers of Hinduism and Islam. Sikh *Rahit Maryada* as approved by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee touches the personal law only marginally and it is outside its scope to include the whole of it. However, all the actions and institutions of the Sikhs should be

subject to the basic ideals of Sikhism, i.e., equality, justice, truth, freedom and human dignity. Thus, any law applicable to the Sikhs should also be tested on the above mentioned touchstone.

Some non-Sikh scholars are also on record that Sikhism does not lay down any personal law. For example, Sir Gurdas Banerjee has observed that "The Sikhs have no written law."¹⁴ Mr. Ward is also of the view that "the Sikhs have no written civil or criminal laws."¹⁵

After its inception, Sikhism was embraced mostly by the Hindus. There has also been a tradition in some Hindu families till recent years, that the eldest son becomes a Sikh. Impressed by the courage and patience displayed by the Sikhs in the *Guru Ka Bagh Morcha*, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya encouraged the Hindus by saying, "I cannot resist asking every Hindu home to have at least one male child initiated into the fold of Khalsa."¹⁶ The number of mixed Hindu-Sikh families is not ignorable. Due to such proximity with the Hindus, the Sikhs continued to be governed by Hindu Law. But some changes were incorporated into this body of law by customs. Punjab Customary Law is known for its vast coverage.

The courts in India had been applying Hindu Law generally to the Sikhs in the absence of any custom varying that law. The first case involving the question of application of personal law to the Sikhs, came up for consideration before the Supreme Court at Calcutta in the year 1815. In *Doe dem Kishan Chandra Shaw V. Baidam Beebec*,¹⁷ wherein it was held that Hindu Law was applicable to the Sikhs in the absence of a custom varying that law. This view was confirmed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1903 in *Ran Bhagwan Koer V. J.C. Bose*.¹⁸ Sir Arthur Wilson observed:

"There were religious bodies in India, which had, at various periods, and under various circumstances, developed out of, or split off from the Hindu system, but whose members have nevertheless continued to live under Hindu Law. Of these, the Jains and the Sikhs are conspicuous examples."

It was held in this case that both in the Succession Act 1865, and in the Probate and Administration Act 1881, term 'Hindu' on its true construction included Sikhs.

In *Bhagwan Singh V. Bakshi Ram*,¹⁹ it was held that in the

case of Sikhs, there is a presumption that the Hindu Law of joint family applies to them. In *Sohan Lal V. Kartar Singh*,²⁰ it was held that in matters concerning the alienation of property, the Sikhs must, in the absence of any custom, be held to be governed by Hindu Law. Dr Sir Gurdas Banerjee has also observed:²¹

"The Sikhs have no written law, their social institutions being regulated by rules which are rules of Hindu Law modified by custom. Their forms of marriage are different from those of Hindu in general."

Thus, the Sikhs were basically governed by customary law in their family matters, but in the absence of any valid custom, they were governed by Hindu Law.

It will also be relevant to mention here the Hindu Marriages Validity Act, 1949. This Act validated with retrospective effect inter-caste marriages, and also validated inter-religion marriage between Hindus, Jains and Sikhs. This Act has been repealed by merging its provisions in Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

APPLICATION OF HINDU CODE

The name 'Hindu Law' is ostensibly associated with religion. Before 1955, it was certainly related with religion, and it meant Shastric Law only, and was applicable to Hindus strictly so called. Now Hindu Law is applicable to a great number of Indians, many of whom are not Hindus by religion. The word 'Hindu' as prefixed with marriage, succession, adoption and guardianship enactments, does not have a pure religious connotation. The official titles of these pieces of legislation do not suggest that these Acts apply strictly to the followers of traditional Hindu faith only. The titles of these Hindu enactments do not answer the question as to who are to be governed by the Act. There are separate provisions to answer this question. These enactments attached extended meaning to the word 'Hindu' as used therein to include about all the Indians who are not Muslims, Christians, Parsis or Jews by religion.

The opposition and criticism of Hindu Personal Law Acts from various quarters died down slowly. But, the Sikhs have not reconciled even after three decades of their application. The Sikhs have objected to the application of Hindu Law in their family affairs.

They argue that Sikhism being an independent and distinct religion, its followers should be governed by a separate personal law coined after its own name, just like that of followers of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The Sikhs feel that their separate religious identity is being suppressed by applying 'Hindu Law' to them. They are also sore that this application of Hindu Law to the Sikhs also projects Sikhism as an off-shoot or branch of Hinduism. Thus, Sikhism is mischievously and arbitrarily subordinated to Hinduism. As a resentment against their clubbing with the Hindus, a demand for a distinct body of law with the name of 'Sikh Personal Law' has been made. They do not like to be construed and called as 'Hindus' as provided by clause (3) of section 2.

The validity otherwise of such objections can be examined by properly analysing section 2 of these Hindu Acts.

Section 2 of the Hindu Marriage Act, of the Hindu Succession Act, and also of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, is similarly worded. It reads as under:

S.2. Application of the Act: (1) This Act applies:

- a. to a person who is a Hindu by religion in any of its forms or developments, including a *Virashaiva*, a *Lingayat* or a follower of the *Brahmo-Samaj*, *Prarthana* or *Arya Samaj*;
- b. to any person who is a Buddhist, Jain or Sikh by religion; and
- c. to any other person domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends, who is not a Muslim, Christian, *Parsi* or Jew by religion, unless it is proved that any such person would not have been governed by the Hindu Law or by any custom or usage as part of that law in respect of any of the matters dealt with herein, if this Act had not been passed.

Sub-section (1) mentions three categories of persons who are regarded as Hindus for the purposes of the Acts. It is irrelevant whether they were Hindus or not, according to Hindu Law as it was in force before the Act. The first category is of Hindus by religion and it is inclusive of various forms and developments of Hinduism such as *Virashaiva*, *Lingayat*, *Brahmo-samaj*, *Prarthana Samaj* and *Arya Samaj*. This category includes orthodox Hindus and also those sects of Hindus who have departed from orthodoxy. So, the 'Hindus' in the old or

narrower sense alongwith the various branches, sects and sub-sects of Hinduism, find a mention in this clause. It is pertinent to note that Sikhs are not included in this category. Therefore, Sikhism is not perceived as an off-shoot or branch of Hinduism by the legislators.

The second category of persons to whom the Acts apply are classified in cl. (b). These are persons who are Buddhist, Jain or Sikh by religion. Assumption is quite evident that in the absence of such a clause, persons of those religious communities would not be covered in the above mentioned first category. It is implied that Buddhists, Jains or Sikhs are not dissenters from Hinduism but belong to distinct religions.²² Thus, the Acts themselves recognise Sikhism as an independent and distinct religion having nothing to do with Hinduism. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has further clarified:

"A bare perusal of clauses (a) and (b) of sub-section (1) of section 2 makes it clear that the Sikh religion, which permits the *Anand Karaj* form of marriage is treated by the Act as distinct from the Hindu religion which does not recognise as valid any marriage ceremony wherein *datta homam* and *sapatpadi* are not performed."²³

The third category as mentioned in clause (c) is of residents of India who are not Muslims, Christians, Parsis or Jews, unless it is proved that they were not formerly governed by Hindu Law.

Section 2 (3) of the Act further clarifies the position. It reads:

"The expression Hindu in any portion of this Act shall be construed as if it included a person who, though not a Hindu by religion, is nevertheless a person to whom this Act applies by virtue of the provisions contained in this section."

This sub-section clearly mentions that these enactments apply to non-Hindu religious communities as well. So, Sikhism is a separate religion, and is recognised as such by these enactments. It is not merely an appendage of Hinduism.

Simply because the Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are governed by a common personal law does not mean that they belong to a single religion or all of them are Hindu.

Justice Bhattacharjee opines, "The Buddhists, the Jains and the Sikhs of India are classical-examples of persons ceasing to be

Hindu for the purpose of religion, but remaining Hindu for the administration of law."²⁴

But, the statement of the learned judge cannot be accepted as correct, as the Sikhs no longer remain Hindus for the administration of law or for any other purpose. It is just by fiction that they are to be construed as 'Hindus' for the purpose of these Acts, even though they are not 'Hindu by religion'. Clause 3 of Section 2 itself makes the position clear.

It may also be pointed out that the word 'Hindu' is not defined as inclusive of Sikhs and others. It is Section 3 which is defining various words. It is perhaps to avoid such impression that S.2 is separately included to explain the application of the Acts.

Since, Hinduism was the dominant of the four religious communities to whom the four Acts of 1955-56 apply, the Acts were named as Hindu Acts. It is also said to be done for the sake of brevity and convenience.

But, the prefix of 'Hindu' in the titles of the four Acts is totally unjustified. It is not convincing that the nomenclature is given because Hindu is the majority community and the other three communities are in minority. Can we call India as Hindu India on the same analogy? The objection of the Sikhs, they being non-Hindus, why should they be governed by Hindu Law, is perfectly valid. The apparent irritant cannot be removed by reading and explaining Section 2 of these Acts. The titles of these Acts require urgent and immediate amendment by removing word 'Hindu' which may be or may not be replaced by a secular term like 'Indian'.

A MISCONCEPTION

Some law men wrongly perceive that Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution,²⁵ influenced the application of Hindu Law to the Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

The remarks of the revising author of Mayne's Hindu Law & Usage²⁶ require specific mention:

"The Constitution makers were fully conscious of the broad and comprehensive character of Hindu religion; and so, while guaranteeing the fundamental right of freedom of religion,

Explanation II to Article 25 has made it clear that reference to Hindu shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion, and reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly. Consistently with this constitutional provision the Hindu Marriage Act, the Hindu Succession Act, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act have extended the application of these Acts to all persons who can be regarded as Hindus in this broad comprehensive sense."

It is submitted that this is not the correct view. The Supreme Court has mentioned that the above mentioned Explanation is meant for Article 25, and has no application anywhere else.²⁷

In a recent article,²⁸ a Sikh advocate also pleades that Hindu Personal Law enactments are applicable to the Sikhs because of Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution. According to him, "... any legislation of social welfare and reform in respect of Personal Law of Hindus.... will.... be automatically extended to the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, who are presumed to be Hindus in terms of Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution."

He repeats:

"It is with a special purpose that the drafter of Constitution incorporated a provision in Exp. II to Art. 25 (2) (b) that 'reference to 'Hindus' shall construe as reference to persons professing Sikh religion'. This provision has given... power to frame legislation for social welfare and reform like HMA 1955, HSA 1956 and other allied Acts, which were automatically extended and also made applicable to Sikh people, who were presumed to be Hindus in terms of aforesaid provisions of Art. 25 of the Constitution. In fact, provisions of Hindu Code Bill and allied Acts, which were super-imposed and automatically extended to the Sikhs."²⁹

He concludes suggesting:

"That Explanation II to Article 25 (2) (b) may be suitably amended so as to exclude the Sikhs from its purview. Consequently, the Amendment Acts of Hindu Personal Law,

namely, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 will automatically cease to be applicable to the Sikhs.³⁰

However, the arguments and the conclusion of the learned advocate are not correct. Hindu Acts are not extended to the Sikhs because of the said Explanation to Article 25. These are extended to the Sikhs because of the specific provision, i.e., Section 2 (1) (b) in these very enactments, which quite clearly and specifically extend the application of these Acts to the Sikhs. In the absence of such a provision, these pieces of legislation would not have been applicable to the Sikhs. It is absolutely wrong to say that these are automatically applicable to the Sikhs because of Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution, and will cease to be applicable if word 'Sikh' is removed from Explanation II.

For further clarification, it will be relevant to mention a Supreme Court ruling.³¹ The President's Order 1950 provides that no person professing a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed as a member of the Scheduled Castes. A Buddhist claimed the benefits of reservations for Scheduled Castes on the basis of Explanation II to Article 25 saying, that he is also a Hindu as per the said Explanation. The Supreme Court held that benefit of Constitution (SC) Order 1950 cannot be claimed by Buddhists because Explanation II is only for the purpose of Article 25(2) (b) and for no other. Thus, the Explanation is strictly meant for the purpose of Article 25(2) (b) and has absolutely no application or relevance outside the purview of that sub-clause.³²

It is agreed that Explanation II to Article 25, and Section 2 of various Hindu enactments, are similarly providing that use of word 'Hindu' should be construed as 'Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist' for the respective limited purposes. All the religions of Indian origin are clubbed together though quite unjustifiably. In case of Explanation II to Article 25, the mention of 'Sikh' is totally unwarranted and unnecessary. But in both the cases, independent status of four different religions is specifically maintained and the other three religions are in no way mingled or amalgamated or subordinated to Hinduism.

But, the conclusion of the Advocate that deletion of word 'Sikh' from Explanation II will have the effect of automatic cessation of application of HMA, HSA and HMGA to the Sikhs, is totally incorrect. These will continue to be applicable, inspite of such a

deletion, due to section 2(1) (b) in these Acts.

INDEPENDENT IDENTITY OF SIKHISM – JUDICIAL VIEW

The courts have noted the independent and distinct identity of Sikhism and its difference with Hinduism. In *Basant Singh v. Hem Singh*,³³ Zafar Ali J. dealt with the history of the separation of the Sikh community from the Hindus and remarked, "Guru Gobind Singh, in fact, renounced Hinduism and rejected everything that smacked of it." Similarly, Khundkar J. of Calcutta High Court in *Inder Singh v. Sadhu Singh*³⁴ said, "It was not until the tenth and the last guru, Guru Gobind Singh, that a fundamental cleavage from Hinduism was attempted. Guru Gobind Singh sought to establish a military and political community, which in religious matter, would be self-contained and independent of Hinduism."

Keeping in view the difference between Hindu and Sikh perception, the Lahore High Court observed, "It is not proper to apply general principles of Hindu Law of Marriage to the parties who are Sikhs."³⁵ Of course, this is not the law after 1955 when Hindu Marriage Act came into being, and section 3 of the same makes it applicable to the Sikhs also.

The Supreme Court of India³⁶ has also observed:

"Bihar Hindu Religious Trust Act does not violate Article 14 for not being applicable to the Sikh religious trusts. There are differences between Hindus and Sikhs on some of the essential details of the faiths which they profess and the religious practices they observe. There are also organisational differences in the matter of religious trusts between Hindus and the Sikhs."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

An analysis of codified Hindu Law shows that it is most suited to the needs of modern progressive societies. The Sikhs, being the most progressive community in India, should not be deprived of its application. It may be mentioned that some enlightened Muslims complain against the Indian rulers that they do not deliberately amend and codify their Personal Law under the bogey of opposition of Muslim *ulemas*, to intentionally keep them backward and retrogressive. In 1983, Mrs. Indira Gandhi agreed to consider the demand of separate Sikh

Personal Law immediately after it was made. Sant Longowal then remarked that there might be nothing beneficial to the Sikhs in a separate law because the Prime Minister had so easily and readily conceded it.

Analysis of these laws further shows that there is nothing in these which contradicts with the basic Sikh principles. These laws, in fact, endeavour to elevate and uplift the position of women in the society. And Sikhism is already known for giving due respect to the weaker sex. In fact, this personal law code promotes one of the ideals of Sikhism. It can be asserted that the contents of these law are more in accord with the principles of Sikhism than those of Hinduism.

On the other hand, Hindu Law is not essentially Hindu in form and spirit. For all practical purposes, the (old) Hindu Law has ceased to exist in the areas in which law is codified. The Sikhs have developed a sort of hatred with this law considering that law of majority community is being imposed upon them against their will and without their consent. The reality is that its basic character is no longer Hindu. Most of it is borrowed from England, from where almost all other civil and criminal laws are borrowed.

The Sikhs feel disgruntled for being subjected to Hindu Law while they are not Hindus. This is a genuine grievance. The explanation that the minute reading of these laws reveals independent existence of Sikhism is not convincing. The Sikhs feel hurt, when they are told that their marriage, adoption, succession, guardianship or maintenance is governed by Hindu Law. The sensitive Sikh mind cannot endure such a wrong labeling. It is palpable injustice in a secular state to compel a minority community to accept a label which affects its independent and distinct nature. The Sikhs will like to be governed by a law with a secular title and nature, with no religious tag on it. Sikh sentiments should be respected by changing the titles of these four Acts and by making other consequential amendments. The community should not be unnecessarily pushed to reject these Personal Laws as a whole or clamour for separate personal laws. Therefore, immediate deletion of word 'Hindu' from the titles of Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act is required.

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SIKH PERSONAL LAW AND ARTICLE 25 OF CONSTITUTION

Harbinder Pal Singh

Article 25 of the Constitution of India deals with the freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. It deals with fundamental rights. Clause (1) of the Article guarantees the right of freedom of conscience and right to profess, practice or propagate any religion.

Clause (2) grants power to the state to make any laws.

- (a) Regulating or restricting any political or secular activity associated with religious practice.
- (b) Providing for social welfare reform or throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

EXPLANATION I: Article 25 guarantees the freedom to the Sikhs' religious practice of carrying and wearing *kirpan*.

EXPLANATION II: Article 25 states that in sub-clause (b) of Clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference, to the persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

The application of comprehensive definition of the term Hindu as including Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists has two fold effect. Firstly, it will be applicable if the states endeavour to make any legislation of social welfare and reform in respect of Personal Law of Hindus which will also be automatically extended to Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, who are presumed to be Hindus in terms of Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution. Secondly, it will enable the state to make laws regarding Sikh religious places or gurdwaras of public character to ensure that these places are thrown open to all the classes or sections of Sikh faith.

The aforesaid interpretation of provisions contained in Explanation II has also been upheld and approved by the Supreme Court in the case of *Yagnapursh Dasji Vs Muldas* (A.I.R. 1966 Supreme Court 1119).

In the aforesaid case, Chief Justice Gajendra Gadkar observed:

"The Constitution makers were fully conscious of the broad and comprehensive character of Hindu religion and so while guaranteeing the fundamental right to freedom of religion, Explanation II to Article 25 has made it clear that in sub-Clause (b) of Clause (2), the reference to Hindu shall be construed as including a reference to the persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion, and reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

Consistently with the constitutional provisions of Explanation II to Article 25, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 have extended the application of these Acts to all persons who can be regarded as Hindus in this broad and comprehensive sense. Section 2 of Hindu Marriage Act, for instance, provides that this Act applies:

- (a) to any person who is Hindu by religion in any form or development including a Virashuiva, a Singayat or a follower of Brahmo Prathara or Arya Samaj;
- (b) to any person who is a Buddhist, Jain or Sikh by religion; and
- (c) to any other person domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends who is not a Muslim, Christian or Jew by religion."

The same provision is made in the other three Acts to which we have referred.

In an Article published in *Leader* dated 26th Feb., 1995, under the caption 'Does Article 25 of the Constitution deprive the Sikhs of their identity', its author Dr Kamal Kant contends that "the word Hindu occurs in the Article 25 only with regard to throwing open of religious places. Otherwise all other powers are in respect of all the other religions. So the only effect of inclusion of the word Sikhs in Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution is that it enables the

Govt. to make laws to ensure that Sikh religious places of public character are thrown open to all the classes and sections of their faith. But as entry to Sikh gurdwaras is open not only to all the classes of Sikhs but the people of all religions, the question of Govt. exercising power in this regard under cover of Article 25 (2) (b) can never arise".

The inclusion of Sikhs in the Article, far from interfering with their religious freedom and sentiments and merging them with Hindus, is devoid of any significance and is mere superfluity. It does not have any practical relevance. It is surprising why it was at all included in the Article. It is difficult to regard it as anything else than a drafting flaw.

It is submitted that this narrow interpretation is not warranted by provisions of Article 25 of the Constitution, because it may be pointed out that the Constitution of India was drafted by a galaxy of talented legal luminaries of India and any clause or explanation there-to, which is included in the chapter on fundamental rights, cannot be dismissed in a summary manner as drafting flaw of superfluity.

It is with special purpose that the drafter of the Constitution incorporated a provision in Explanation II to Article 25(2) (b) that "reference to Hindu shall construe as reference to persons professing Sikh religion." This provision has given them power to frame legislation for social welfare and reform like Hindu Marriage Act, 1956, Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and other allied Acts, which were automatically extended and also made applicable to Sikh people, who were presumed to be Hindus in terms of aforesaid provisions of Article 25 of the Constitution. In fact, the provisions of the Hindu Code Bill and allied Acts were super-imposed and automatically extended to Sikhs. Thus, Sikh Personal Law was amended in an arbitrary manner without even consulting the Sikh people or bothering to care about their sentiments for their religious laws and jurisprudence, accordingly.

Consequently, Sikh Personal Law was enacted and amended by Pandit Nehru without any regard for Sikh jurisprudence, their legal conventions and perceptions. In fact, the arbitrary manner in which the Personal Law of Sikhs was amended, raised their apprehensions, if they were really equal citizens of India as ordained in the Constitution or were subservient citizens of the state, the sanctity of whose Personal Laws depends on the whims and caprices of certain leaders who happen to belong to the majority community.

SIKH RELIGION AND PERSONAL LAWS

The fundamental principles of the religious philosophy of Sikhs are monotheism or unity of God and Brotherhood of man. The Sikh Scripture starts with the word '*Ek*' which proceeds '*Om*' and is pronounced as "*Ek Onkar*" which signifies that "there is but one God", or '*La Ilah Ill Lilah*' in Arabic language. Guru Granth Sahib contains verses and hymns in praise of Almighty God, by the Sikh Gurus, Hindu *Bhagtas* as well as *Sufi* Saints.

In fact, Sikhism was a revolt against polytheism, predominance of rituals and power of priestly classes who professed to be sole custodians of religious and legal texts which happened to be in Sanskrit. On the contrary, the language of preachings of Sikh Gurus was in spoken language used by the ordinary masses of the Punjab. Thus, they introduced the system of Anand Marriage in which the Hindu ceremony of invocation before sacred fire, (i.e., *Agni Devta* or God of Fire) was replaced with invocation before monotheistic Almighty God or *Ek Onkar*! Thus the polytheistic concept of *Agni Devta* or God of Fire was replaced by the monotheistic concept of *Ek Onkar* or Almighty God in the Sikh marriage ceremony. In fact, the Anand Marriage ceremony essentially involves two ceremonies which are necessary for solemnisation of a Sikh marriage. Firstly, invocation before God, the Almighty by reciting Anand Karaj hymns or *shabads* from Guru Granth Sahib and secondly, performing four *lawans*, which involves going round Guru Granth Sahib four times by the bridegroom and bride together. The sacred hymns from Guru Granth Sahib are recited by ordinary common men and this ceremony does not require the services of any organised priestly class. It is pertinent to mention that these reforms pertaining to Personal Law of Sikhs were kept confined in their application to Sikhs only during Sikh Rule in Punjab from 1765 A.D. to 1849 A.D. and the prevailing Hindu law was not amended by Sikh rulers. Subsequently, legislation under the caption of Anand Marriage Act, 1909 granting validity to Anand Marriage ceremonies prevalent amongst Sikhs, was passed by the Government of India.

Consequently, any subsequent amendment or enactment in the garb of reform of Sikh Personal Law can be made in accordance with the percepts of Sikh jurisprudence by the general concordance or

agreement of an assembly of Sikh *sangat* and Sikh jurists who are learned in principles of Sikh religion and law. It is evident that Sikh Personal Law ought not to have been amended without concurrence of Sikh *sangat* and Sikh jurists. As such, the contention on the part of Govt. of India that Sikhs were brought into the ambit of Explanation II to Article 25 of the Constitution with the concurrence of Master Tara Singh does not carry weight because no such assembly of Sikh *sangat* composed of Sikh jurists was called for the purposes of amendment of Sikh Personal Law in 1956.

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AND PERSONAL LAW

In the Constitution of India, it has been clearly provided by Article 372 that all the laws in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of the Constitution, (i.e. before 26th January, 1950) shall continue until altered or repealed, or amended by the legislature or other competent authority. Sub-Clause (2) of Article 372 *ibid* also provides that continuance of the laws in force will be subject to such adoption and modification for making the provisions of these laws for bringing into accord with the provisions of the Constitution. It further empowers the President to order making of such adoptions and modifications in these laws.

Aforesaid provisions contained in Article 372 of the Constitution grant a legal approval to respective Personal Law of all the communities, namely, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs — to continue to be applicable until and unless, its continuance is contradictory to the provisions of the Constitution and it requires their modification by the President of India in terms of Clause (2) of Article 372 of the Constitution.

It is a universally accepted principle of law that a community should have exclusive right to evolve its Personal Law or reform it because these laws are its exclusive concern. It was for this reason that Hindu Personal Law was amended by enacting Hindu Code Bill by Hindu leaders as it was an exclusive concern of Hindu people. It resulted in enactment of four Acts, namely; Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.

But, the application of aforesaid four Acts amending Hindu Personal Law was extended arbitrarily and unilaterally to Sikh people

without consulting Sikh jurists, or legal representatives for ascertaining their legal propriety, traditions and conventions. It is so because explanation II to Article 25 (2) (b) has given absolute power to the state to extend any legislation of social welfare or reform pertaining to Personal Law of Hindus automatically to Sikh people on the assumption of their being construed or deemed as Hindus without making or specifying any provision for consultation of Sikh jurisprudence, their legal customs, conventions, percepts and traditions.

As Article 25 dealing with right to freedom of religion, does not contain a similar provision in respect of other minorities like Christians, Muslims or Jews, Pandit Nehru and his henchmen did not dare to amend their Personal Law. In fact, in accordance with the provisions contained in Article 372 of the Constitution of India, the Personal Law of other minorities namely Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, has not been amended.

It is evident that provisions of explanation II to Article 25 (2) (b) of the Constitution have far reaching consequences on Sikh Personal Law because all the amendments in Hindu Personal Law are extended automatically to the Sikh Personal Law without providing any machinery for consultation of Sikh people, their religious sentiments, their jurisprudence or legal institutions.

IMPACT OF ARTICLE 25 ON HINDU SIKH IDENTITY

Again Dr Kamla Kant says 'that Akalis have been airing their grievance that Article 25 has made Sikhs part of Hindus. But, there is no basis for this grievance. Far from merging them with Hindus, the inclusion of Sikhs under Article 25 implies a tacit recognition of their separate identity. If they had not been considered to have an identity of their own, there would have been no necessity to clarify that they would be deemed included in the term Hindu, not Hindu religion.'

In this connection, it is pertinent to mention that historically there never was any feeling of Hindu - Sikh Divide either during the period of Sikh Rule in Punjab from 1765 A.D. to 1849 A.D. or succeeding century of British Rule upto August, 1947. In fact, during the Sikh rule, Hindus enjoyed topmost positions in the Government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh whose Prime Minister Mr. Dhayan Singh Dogra and Finance Minister Pandit Deena Nath Kaul were staunch Hindus.

This phenomenon or practice continued till partition of the Indian sub-continent in August 1947, when Hindus and Muslims became rulers of Indian and Pakistani territory, respectively, due to hasty withdrawal of erstwhile English rulers.

IDENTITY RE-DEFINED IN POST-PARTITION INDIA

The partition of India in 1947 involved partition of the Punjab as well. It also resulted in change of power equation of the country and centre of gravity of political power of the country gravitated towards Hindi heartland. Consequently, Hindu leadership of the Punjab became over enthusiastic and zealous to grab the political hegemony of the state and identified themselves as the sole custodians of political power which they were reluctant to share with other minority groups, not even with Sikhs, who had a common cultural bond with them.

Thus, the Punjabi Hindus in their bid to search for a new identity in the changed equation of political power disowned Punjabi, i.e., Punjabi culture, Punjabi language and traditions to become part and parcel of the Hindi speaking people of the Hindi heartland, who had become political masters of post-partition India by a sheer historical accident, namely, partition of the Indian sub-continent.

In this fresh search for separate identity of Punjabi Hindus, the house of Nehru and its coterie, who remained consistently in the saddle of political power during the last four decades with a view to increasing their Vote Bank in Punjab, played a significant but ignominious role in implanting great divide between Punjabi Hindu vis-a-vis other Punjabis i.e. Sikhs, Christians and Muslims, by impressing upon them that, Punjabi being a language of subservient people, may be disowned by Hindus. They were instigated to opt for the language culture of Hindi-heartland which had become the predominant culture of the country after partition of Indian Punjab. Thus, Punjabi Hindus disowned their mother tongue as well as Punjabi culture.

In this struggle for getting a separate new identity for Punjabi Hindus, who aimed to be aligned and identified with the political overlords of new Delhi, the sense of identity of Sikh people also got heightened and more pronounced. Thus in this process of attacks and counter-attacks, on respective language and culture, the identity of

both Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab has been redefined — either as Hindus or as Sikhs.

A question arises as to what is the rationale, logical basis or utility of Explanation II to Article 25(2)(b) to Sikhs in the present social set up? It is submitted that it has rendered the position of Sikhs anomalous and ambiguous because they can neither be classified as belonging to the majority community to share its benefits and privileges, nor can they be categorised as a minority community, and claim protection from amendment of their Personal Law. Therefore, it is suggested that explanation II to Article 25(2)(b) may be suitably amended so as to exclude the Sikhs from its purview. Consequently, the Amendment Acts of Hindu Personal Law, namely, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, will automatically cease to be applicable to Sikhs.

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Section V
PUNJABI

ਇਕ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ, ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ

ਡਾ. ਗੁਰਨਾਮ ਕੌਰ

ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਪੇਸ਼ੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਕ ਆਹਲਾ ਆਈ. ਏ. ਐਸ. ਅਫ਼ਸਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਰਿਟਾਇਰ ਹੋਏ, ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਮਾਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਸਗੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਸਨ। ਸੰਸਥਾ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਲਗਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਸ਼ਿੱਦਤ ਨਾਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਆਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਤੁਰ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਇਉਂ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ, ਜੋ ਚੰਗੀ ਭਲੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਆਈ. ਏ. ਐਸ. ਅਫ਼ਸਰ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕੈਰੀਅਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਜ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਣਗੇ। ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਅਕਾਦਮੀਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਰੇ ਹਨ, ਜਾਂ ਅਕਾਦਮੀਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਤੋਰਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਛੋਟੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਮਰਹੂਮ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਡੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਹੈਡ, ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ 'ਵਡੇ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ' ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਵੀ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ 'ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ' ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ "ਸਿਖਇਜ਼ਮ : ਦ ਕੰਪੋਰੇਟਿਵ ਸਟੱਡੀ ਆਫ ਇਟਸ ਮੈਟਾਫਿਜ਼ਿਕਸ ਐਂਡ ਥੀਓਲੋਜੀ" ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ, ਸਿੱਖ-ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਲਗਨ ਅਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ। ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਮਿਲੋ ਤਾਂ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਅਕਤਿਤੱਵ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਿਲੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਪੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਦੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਤੀਖਣ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਹੈ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ

ਖਿਆਲ ਪੱਕਾ ਘਰ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬੁੱਧੀਹੀਣ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਭੱਜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਦੂਸਰੇ, ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਕੰਮ ਚਲਦਾ ਸੀ, ਦਰਸਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਮੈਂ ਇੱਕਲੀ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਛਟਪਟਾਹਟ ਵੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਲੋੜਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਵੀ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੀਗਲ ਦੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਆਗ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਸੀ (ਇੰਟਰਵਿਊ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਿਆਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੀ ਹੀਗਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਪੁੱਛੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ)। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੁਆਰਫ਼ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਤੀਬਰ ਇੱਛਾ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਛੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਵੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਜਦੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਹੀ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਹੀਨ-ਭਾਵ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਹਿਜ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਅਗੇ ਵੱਧਣ ਲਈ ਹੱਲਾ ਸ਼ੇਰੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਲੇ ਹੋਲੇ ਮੁਸਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਸੀ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਦਿਨ, ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਦੀ ਰਜਿਸਟ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਦੀ ਉਹ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ, ਡਾ. ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸੱਦ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਏ ਨੇ, ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਨਾਮ ਕੋਰ ਬੀਬਾ ਨੇ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਲਈ ਰਜਿਸਟ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਾਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ, "ਰੀਜਨ ਐਂਡ ਰੈਵੇਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਇਨ ਸਿਖਇਜ਼ਮ"। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਮਿੰਟ ਮੁਸਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗੇ "ਤੁਸਾਂ ਸਬਜੈਕਟ ਬੜਾ ਔਖਾ ਚੁਣਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਰ ਲਉਗੇ? ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਆਵੇਗੀ।" ਮੈਂ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਬੇੜਾ ਡਰ ਗਈ ਪਰ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਹੌਸਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਬੋਲੀ, "ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥਣ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹੱਥ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਕਿਉਂ ਆਵੇਗੀ।" ਜਦੋਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਦਾ ਵਾਇਵਾ 4 ਅਗਸਤ 1986 ਨੂੰ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਨ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੈਂ ਰੀਡਰ ਦੀ ਪੋਸਟ ਤੇ ਚੁਣੀ ਗਈ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਸਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਏ। ਮੈਂ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾ ਕੇ ਸੀ-13 (ਆਪਣੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼) ਤੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਾਰ ਰੋਕ ਲਈ। ਨਾਲ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਬਲਕਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਸਨ। ਕਹਿੰਦੇ "ਅਸੀਂ ਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਈ ਦੇਣ ਘਰ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸੀ। ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੋਇਆ।" ਇਹ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ-ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ। ਜਿਥੇ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਸੀ, ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਅਫਜ਼ਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੋਚਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ-ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਪਲਿਉਂ ਪੈਸੇ ਖਰਚ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਦੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੈਂਡ-ਵਿਚਰ ਦਾ ਸਾਦਾ ਖਾਣਾ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਡਾ. ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ ਵੀ

ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਈ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਘਰ ਖਾਣੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਚਲਣ ਲਈ ਕਹਿਣਾ, ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਲੰਚ-ਬਾਕਸ ਕੱਢ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ “ਆਪਣੇ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੈ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਾਫੀ ਹਾਊਸ ਚਲੋ, ਉਥੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਲੰਚ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।” ਸੰਨ 1981 ਵਿਚ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਮਰਤੀ ਵਿਖਿਆਨਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੱਦਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਲੈਕਚਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਸੀ, “ਐਂਥੋਪੀਸਟੀ ਆਫ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰੀ ਬੀੜ”। ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰੀ ਬੀੜ ਦੀ ਸਾਰਥਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਬਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਬਲਕਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਟਾਰੀਵਾਲਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਲਈ ਤਖਤ ਜਾਂ ਤਖਤਾ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਲੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਇਹ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੈਕਚਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਉੱਕਾ ਪੁੱਕਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਲ ਵੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਵਾ-ਵਲ ਵਾਲਾ ਲਿਫਾਫਾ ਭੇਟਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਲੱਗੀ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਸੈਨੇਟ ਹਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਦੇ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਲਿਫਾਫਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਵਧਾਇਆ। ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗੇ “ਇਹ ਕੀ ਹੈ?” ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਤੁੱਛ ਜਿਹੀ ਭੇਟਾ। ਹੱਥ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ “ਇਹ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਲੇ ਕੰਮ ਤੇ ਲਾ ਦਿਉ।” ਹੋਰਾਨੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਲਿਉਂ ਪੈਟਰੋਲ ਡੂਕ ਕੇ, ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਛਪਵਾ ਕੇ, ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਵੰਡਣ ਲਈ, ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਾਹ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਲਈ, ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਫਾਉਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਵਲੋਂ ਛਪੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ, “ਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਇਡੀਓਲੋਜੀ” ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਕੀਮਤ ਲਈ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ “ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਇਹੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਪ ਪੜ੍ਹਨੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਹੋਰ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਗੇ।”

ਮੇਰੇ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਦੇ ਥੀਸਿਸ ਦੀ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਛਾਪਣ ਲਈ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਵਰੀ 1990 ਵਿਚ ਕਾਜਮੇ ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ, ਦਿੱਲੀ ਨੇ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਛਾਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਰੜਾ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਖਰ ਅੱਖਰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸੀ। ਪੁਸਤਕ ਛਪਣ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋਏ। ਸ. ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਆਏ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਫੀ-ਹਾਊਸ ਚਾਹ ਪੀਣ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਡਾ. ਬਲਕਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ “ਗੁਰਨਾਮ ਕੌਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੋ, ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਤੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਪੇਪਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਲਵੋ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਤੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜਾਵਾਂਗੇ”। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੈਕਲੋਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਵਧੀਕੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਵਿੱਚੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮਾਰਚ 1990 ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਭੇਜਾਂ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਗਈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਅੱਖਰ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ, ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਆਪ ਜਾ ਕੇ, ਨੇੜੇ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਟਾਈਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਟਾਈਪ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਏ। ਇਹ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ

ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਪਰ ਖੁਰਦਬੀਨੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ। ਨਵੰਬਰ 1990 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ, ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਟੱਡੀਜ਼ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਣ ਗਈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਹਤ ਦੀ ਵਜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕੇ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰੀ ਟਿਕਟ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਸੀ, ਯਾਤਰਾ ਵੀ ਅਲੱਗ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਬਾਕੀ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਠਹਿਰੀ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਇਕ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੁੱਛ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਠਹਿਰਨ ਦਾ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਉਹ ਕਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਠਹਿਰਨਾ ਹੈ? ਹਰ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਦਾ ਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਫੋਨ ਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਤਕਲੀਫ਼ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਮੈਂ ਠੀਕ ਠਾਕ ਹਾਂ? ਇਹ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਪਿਆਰ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਛੋਟਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਦਿਆਂ ਕਦੇ ਕੱਜੂਸੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ।

ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਪੀ. ਐਚ. ਡੀ. ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਦਕਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੱਛਮ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਖੋਜਾਰਥੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਮੌਕੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਨਫ਼ਰੰਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਉਹ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗੈਰਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਾਨ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਉਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਤਾ ਕਿ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗੈਰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਣੀ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ 16 ਮਾਰਚ 1991 ਨੂੰ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਦੀ ਖਬਰ ਮਿਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਦਮਾ ਅਸਹਿ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਕਾਰ ਐਕਸੀਡੈਂਟ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਰਜਿੰਦਰਾ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰਾ ਛੋਟਾ ਬੱਚਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਕ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਖਬਰ ਪੁੱਛਣ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਸਕੀ ਸੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਸਰਕਲ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਆਂਢ ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਖਬਰ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਾਨ ਹੋਏ। ਮੇਰੇ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਹ ਅਤੇ ਡਾ. ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ-ਉਥੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਉਦਾਸ ਸਨ। ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਗ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਯਤੀਮ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੁਰ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਖੋਮ੍ਹਾ ਢਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਨਬਰ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਮ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਮੈਂ ਭੋਗ ਤੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ। ਮੇਰੇ ਘਰ ਬੈਠਿਆਂ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਫਿਕਰਾ ਸੀ, “ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਖਿਆਲ ਵਿਚ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਬਦਲ ਹੈ?” ਮੈਂ ਭਿਜੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਰੇ ਗਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ, “ਨਹੀਂ ਜੀ, ਮੇਰੇ ਖਿਆਲ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਲੇ-ਦੁਆਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ

ਸਮਝਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਏਨੀ ਤਿੱਖੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੀ।" ਅੱਜ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਤੁਰ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਭਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਖੀ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੋਚਦੀ ਹਾਂ, "ਕੀ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਬਦਲ ਹੈ" ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਦੁਖੀ ਮਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਲੇ-ਦੁਆਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਏਨੀ ਲਗਨ, ਦਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਸਵਾਰਥ ਸੇਵਾ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਮਾਂ, ਆਪਣੀ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ-ਪੂੰਜੀ, ਆਪਣਾ ਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਵੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਲਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ? ਮੇਰਾ ਜੀਅ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉੱਚੀ ਸੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਾਵਾਂ ਕਿ "ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਟਾਰੀਵਾਲੇ ਸੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਤਰਤਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਬਾਕੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡੀ।" ਕਮਾਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਦੇ ਬਦਲੇ ਨ ਪੈਸੇ ਦੀ, ਨਾ ਸ਼ੁਹਰਤ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਭੁੱਖ ਸੀ। ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਵੇ ਸਹੀ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਬੰਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਸੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਆਪ ਚਲ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੇ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਨੋਇਲ ਕਿੰਗ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਐਮਰੀਟਸ ਨੇ ਵਿਜ਼ਿਟਿੰਗ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਚਾਹਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਖੋਜ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਨਿਜੀ ਦਿਲਚਸਪੀ ਲੈ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਐਕਸਟੇਨਸਨ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਕਰਵਾਏ। ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਸ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੱਡੇ ਸਮਝਦਾਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਇਉ। ਕਿੰਨਾ ਚਾਅ ਸੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਘੇਰਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦਾ। ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਹਲ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਮਿੰਟ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਜਾਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ-ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਅ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਨੋਇਲ ਕਿੰਗ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅੱਖ ਦਾ ਅਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਸਾਂਝਿਆ ਸੀ ਮਿਲਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ। ਸ਼ਾਮ ਦੀ ਚਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਚਰਚਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਈ. ਏ. ਐਸ. ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਸ. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਲਕੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ। ਅੱਗੋਂ ਚਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਬੜਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ "ਤੁਸੀਂ ਏਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਕੀ ਖਾਵਾਂਗੇ?" ਅੱਗੋਂ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ, "ਆਪਣੇ ਬੀਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛੋ।" ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਇਹੀ ਫਿਕਰਾ ਬੀਜੀ ਕੋਲ ਦੁਹਰਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਸਿਆ, "ਅੱਜ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ-ਦਿਨ ਹੈ"। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਨਵੰਬਰ ਜਾਣੀ 1993 ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਤਾ ਕਿ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਜਨਮ-ਦਿਨ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਨਾ ਸਕਾਂਗੇ। ਡਾ. ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਏ, ਡਾ. ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਨਸੁਖਾਨੀ ਗਏ, ਡਾ. ਤ੍ਰਿਲੋਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਤੁਰ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਇੱਕ ਸੋਧ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ। ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਰਥਾ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਰੋਲ ਮਾਡਲ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਉਤਰ ਸਕੀਏ। ਡਾਕਟਰ ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ

ਤੋਂ ਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਦਾ ਦੁੱਖ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਛੱਡੋ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਫਿਕਰ ਕਰੋ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸ਼. ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਰੀਸ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਲਿਆਵਾਂਗੇ ਲਭਕੇ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਰ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਭੋਰ ਤੇ ਬਿਰਾਜਮਾਨ ਹਨ।

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ਆਹ! ਦੂਲਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ

ਪ੍ਰਿ. ਹਰਿਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ

ਮੀਰ ਮੇਮਨ ਦਾ ਬੰਦੀ-ਖਾਨੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਇੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸ਼ਿਅਰ ਹੈ:

“ਨਹੀਂ ਆਤੀ ਉਨ ਕੀ ਯਾਦ, ਤੇ ਹਫ਼ਤੋਂ ਭਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਤੀ;
ਮਗਰ, ਜਬ ਯਾਦ ਆਤੇ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਯਾਦ ਆਤੇ ਹੈ।”

ਸੱਚ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਸੰਜੋਗ-ਵਿਜੋਗ ਦੀ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤਦੀ ਦਾਗ਼-ਫ਼ੁਰਕਤ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿੱਦਤ ਅਤੇ ਰੱਬੀ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਿੱਠੀ, ਪਿਆਰੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਰਗ-ਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਹੀ ਵਿਜੋਗੀਆਂ ਪਾਸ ਅਮੋਲਕ ਰਤਨਾਂ-ਜ਼ਵਾਹਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਪੋਟਲੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪਿਛੇ ਰੱਖ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦਾ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਵੀ ਸਾਂਭ-ਸੰਭਾਲ ਤੇ ਚੇਤਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਰਮ-ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੀਜੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਲ, ਪਕਾਅ ਕੇ ਸਮੱਸਤ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕੋ ਸਮਾਨ ਵੰਡੇਗਾ, ਉਤਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਤਨ ਤੇ ਮਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਛੜੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਰਿਣ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ; ਅਤੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਤੇ “ਮਹਾਂ ਮਿੱਤਰ” ਦੀ ਸਾਥਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਢੀ ਬਾਬੇ “ਚਾਗਬਾ” ਦਾ ਇਹ ਚਮਨ ਹੋਰ-ਹੋਰ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੀਕੇ ਸੁਗੰਧੀ ਖਿਲਾਰੇਗਾ।

ਅਸੀਮ ਚਿੱਤਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਐਸੀ ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਲੀਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਘੜਨਹਾਰੇ ਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਅਜੀਬ ਭਰਮ ਤੇ ਭ੍ਰਾਂਤੀ ਦਾ ਚੱਕਰ ਵੀ ਚਲਾ ਛੱਡਿਆ ਹੈ। “ਜੇ ਤੁਹੁ ਭਾਵੈ, ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ” ਦੀ ਰੱਬੀ ਰਮਜ਼ ਤੇ ਸਥਰ, ਸੁਕਰ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ਇਹ ਸਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਵਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇੱਕੋ ਵੱਡਾ ਗਿਲਾ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ:

“ਰੱਬਾ! ਤੁਛੋਂ ਖਾਕ ਤੋਂ, ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਅਸਥ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਨੇ।

ਐਪਰ ਨਾਸ਼ਮਾਨ ਕਿਉਂ ਰਚੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਲ ਖੁਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਪਾਈਆਂ ਨੇ।”

ਫੇਰ, ਦੂਸਰਾ ਗਿਲਾ, ਨਰਗਸ ਵਾਂਗ ਇਹ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਬਾਗ਼-ਸਰੋਵਰ ਨੂੰ ਰਮਣੀਕ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਰੱਬ ਦੀਦਾਵਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੇਤੀ-ਛੇਤੀ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਘੱਲਦਾ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ-ਸਰੋਵਰ ਪਾਕ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਰਹੇ, ਕਿਤੇ ਪਾਖੰਡੀ, ਅਗਿਆਨੀ, ਦੰਭੀ ਅਤੇ ਭੋਖੀ ਡੱਢੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਆਮਗਾਹ ਨ ਬਣ ਜਾਵੇ। ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੰਦੇ ਘੱਟ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਰੱਬ ਬਹੁਤੇ। ਫੇਰ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸਦਾ ਲੜ ਫੜੇ:

“ਬੰਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈਂ, ਜਿਤਨੇ ਖੁਦਾ ਹੈਂ ਜਹਾਨ ਮੇਂ,

ਕਿਸ ਕਿਸ ਖੁਦਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਨੇ ਸਜਦਾ ਕਰੇ ਕੋਈ?”

ਅਤੇ ਸੱਚ ਜਾਣਿਓ, ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਓਨੇ ਨਾਸਤਕ, ਪਦਾਰਥਵਾਦੀ ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਆਪ ਪੈਦਾ

ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ, ਜਿੰਨੇ ਅਗਿਆਨੀ ਤੇ ਦੰਭੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਖੰਡ, ਝੂਠ ਤੇ ਦੰਭ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਖਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੇਰੀ ਅਤਿਕਥਨੀ ਨ ਸਮਝਨੀ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਦਰਦਮੰਦ ਆਤਮਾ, ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ ਵੇਖਣ ਤੇ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤੜਫਦੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਨੀ ਵਿਜੋਗ ਦੇ ਗਈ; ਕੇਵਲ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਆਸ਼ਚੀ, ਗਰੀਬੀ ਤੇ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦਰ ਆਇਆ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਤੜਪ, ਸੋਜ਼ ਤੇ ਸੂਝ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਲਈ ਦੁਆ-ਗੇ ਹੋਵੇ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਸਦਾ ਸਰਸ਼ਾਰ ਰਿਹਾ; ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਤੇ ਛਹ ਨਾਲ ਅਸੀਂ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ, ਕਲ੍ਹ ਵੀ, ਨਹੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਗੀਤ ਗੁਨਗੁਨਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੀਏ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਰੀਏ:

“ਹੋਤਾ ਹੈ ਕੇਹਿ-ਦਸਤ ਮੇਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਥੀ ਕਥੀ,
ਵਹੁ ਮਰਦ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਫ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰੇ ਖਜ਼ਫ ਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ।”

ਭਾਵ-ਜਿਸਦਾ ਸੁ-ਵਿਚਾਰ, ਬੁਲੰਦ-ਖਿਆਲੀ ਤੇ ਛਹ ਠੀਕਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਰੀਨਿਆਂ (ਗੁਰਮੁਖਾਂ) ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲ ਦੇਵੇ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੇੜ ਤੁਰਨ ਦਾ ਬਲ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ। ਬਸ! ਯਹੀ ਆਰਥੁ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਹੋਸ਼ ਕਿ ਅਸਾਂ ਵੀ ਓਥੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ।

~ ~ ~

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ : ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ

ਡਾ. ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿਲੋਂ

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦੇ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵੱਲ ਖਿੱਚਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਅਮਿੱਟ ਛਾਪ ਛੱਡੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਸੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਨਾ ਅਸੰਭਵ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਬੜੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਇਕ ਮੂਲ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ¹ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਤਈ ਨਜ਼ਰ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਲਈ, ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਲੜੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਟੌਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਢੁਕਵੀਂ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਥੇਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਨਸੀਹਤ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੀ ਅਗਲੇਰੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਭਾਈ ਸੀਗਾਰੂ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਜੋਤਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਅਸੀਂ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਪਕੜਨੇ ਹੇਠਿ, ਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰ ਕੇ ਪਕੜਨੇ ਹੇਠਿ। ਸਮਾਂ ਕਲਿਯੁਗ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਸਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਕਰ ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਮੀਰੀ ਖਿੱਚ ਲੈਣੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਮਝ ਕਰ ਪੀਰ ਦੀ ਪੀਰੀ ਲੈ ਲੈਣੀ ਹੈ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਛਿਵੀਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦੇ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਰਹਿਣਾ।"² ਪੰਚਮ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਹਿਦਾਇਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ :

ਸਾ ਯੁਧ ਹੋਇ ਤਖਤ ਪਰ ਰਾਜਹੁ।
ਜਥਾ ਸਕਤਿ ਸੇਨਾ ਸੰਗ ਸਾਜਹੁ।³

ਤਖਤ ਰਚਣ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਭਾਵ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਿਲਾਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਸੀ ਕਿ :

ਬ੍ਰਿਧ ਆਦਿਕ ਸਿਖਨਿ ਸਨਮਾਨਹੁ ।
ਪੁਰਾ ਫ਼ਾਰਨਿ ਕੀ ਰੀਤਿ ਪਰਮਾਨਹੁ ।
ਨਈ ਰੀਤ ਇਕ ਰਣ ਕੀ ਕੀਜਹਿ ।
ਅਪਰ ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਸਮ ਗਤੀ ਚਲੀਜਹਿ ।⁴

ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ :- ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਧਾਰਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਇਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਮਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼, ਸਤਹੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕੂਲ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ। ਏਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ। ਫਰੈਡਰਿਕ ਪਿਨਕੋਟ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਂਝ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਕਾਰਣਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜੰਗਮੂ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਕਾਰਣ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਿਸਫਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।⁵ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਜੇ. ਡੀ. ਕਨਿੰਘਮ ਦਾ ਕਥਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਿਜੀ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ।⁶ ਏਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਰ ਜਾਦੂ ਨਾਥ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਸੈਨਾ-ਨਾਇਕ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ।⁷ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਰਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਆਰਨੋਲਡ ਟਾਇਨਬੀ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ "ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਲੋਭ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਸਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਚਮਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੂਰਵ-ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਮਾਰਗ ਤੋਂ ਡਟਕਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਫੜਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਿੱਖਰ ਤੋਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਭੀੜੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਨਾਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਡੇਗ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਧਰਮ ਬਣਨ ਤੇ ਵਾਝਿਆ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।"⁸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਰਸਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਜੱਟ ਕਬੀਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਜੱਟ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆਸ਼ੀਲ ਜਾਪਦੇ ਹਨ।⁹ ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਚੋਰ, ਡਾਕੂ, ਲੁਟੇਰੇ ਤੇ ਧਾੜਵੀ ਅਨਸਰ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਗੱਲੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਝਗੜਾ-ਫਸਾਦ ਖੜਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੇ

ਸਨ।¹⁰ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਉਧਰਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਲੇਡ-ਵੱਸ ਜਾ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਦੰਗਾਬਾਜ਼ ਅਨਸਰਾਂ ਕਾਰਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਾਣ ਬੁੱਝ ਕੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਨਾਰਾਕਸ਼ੀ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਸੀ। ਦੂਜੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਮਲ, ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਸੀ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਤੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਿਖੇੜ ਕੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਰਾਜ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਤੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਅਚਾਨਕ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਹਿਜ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੁਮੇਲ, ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੰਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਦੀ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਪਿਛੇ ਕਈ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਸੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ :- ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਸੂਬਾਈ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਈਰਖਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਵੀ ਸਹਾਰਨੀ ਪਈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਟੜ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਠਬੰਧਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਰੁਕਵਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕੀਤੇ।¹¹ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰਲੇ ਵਿਘਟਨਕਾਰੀ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਜ਼ਬਾਜ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਠੋਸ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ।¹² ਪੰਚਮ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਅੰਦਰ ਫੁੱਟ-ਪਾਊ ਤਾਕਤਾਂ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੀਣਾ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਫਹਿਮੀਆਂ ਉਪਜਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ਾ ਚੁੱਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਕਬਰ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਨਾਮਾ ਵੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।¹³ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਉਦਾਰਵਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਸੁਲ੍ਹਾ-ਕੁਲ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਝੂਠੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਰੋਕ ਲਾਉਣੀ ਉਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਸਮਝੀ। ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਸੁਲਹੀ ਖਾਨ, ਨੂਰਦੀਨ ਤੇ ਚੰਦੂ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਧਕੇਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਕੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਰਵਈਏ ਦਾ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਾ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।¹⁴ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੁਰਖੀਆ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ

ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਸੁਰਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਟੁੰਬਿਆ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਰਵਈਏ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਮਨ ਤੇ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਬੜਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਮੁਆਮਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਪਰਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ, ਸਿਵਾਇ ਕੁਝ ਉਦਾਹਰਣਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਤੇ ਅਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਸੀ। 1605 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਕਬਰ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਗਲ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਹਿਣਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਤੇ ਉਦਾਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ ਸੱਤਾ ਸੰਭਾਲਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਦੀ ਸਰਪਰਸਤੀ ਅਰੰਭ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਕੱਟੜ ਸੁੰਨੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਦੇ ਪੁਨਰ-ਉਥਾਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਤਕੜੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਛੇਤ ਰੱਖੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਵਰਗ ਨੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਬਦਲੇ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਾ ਦੀ ਸਰਪਰਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਾਇਦਾ ਲੈ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ।¹⁵ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ-ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਬਦਲੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਲਾਭ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਰਿਆਇਤਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਸੀ।¹⁶ ਸ਼ਰਾ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਤੇ ਕੁਫ਼ਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਸਨ।¹⁷ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਧ ਰਹੀ ਰੁਚੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਤੋਂ ਚਿੰਤਾਤੁਰ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰਾਨੀ ਤੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਇਤਨੀ ਨਫ਼ਰਤ ਤੇ ਖਿੱਝ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਵਰਤਿਤ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।¹⁸ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਪਹਿਲੋਂ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹਿਜ਼ਾਦਾ ਖੁਸਰੋ ਦੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਬਹਾਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਦੋਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੁਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੁਅੱਸਬ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਬਹਾਨੇ ਹੇਠ ਢੁਪਾ ਲਿਆ।¹⁹ ਇੰਜ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਨੇਤਾ ਤੇ ਵੰਚਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਸੀ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ, ਇਕਰੂਪ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਸਲਾਮੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਮਲ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਿਰਕਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਖਤਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਪੈ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਮੰਗ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਬਹੁ-ਬਿਧਿ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ, ਵੱਖੋ-ਵੱਖਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਸਹਿਰੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ

ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਇਕ ਉਚਿਤ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਵੱਲ ਕਦਮ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ-ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮੁਗਲ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਨਿਰੰਕੁਸ਼ ਤੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਤੇ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ :- ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦੀ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉਤਰਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਮਾਪਦੰਡ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ।²⁰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਵੀ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ।²¹ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਤੋਂ ਪਰਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਦਭਾਵਨਾ, ਨੇਕੀ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਰਾਜ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤ-ਖੋਰੀ, ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ।²² ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੇਮਾ ਵੀ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਆਪ ਹੈ।²³ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਕੀ ਤੇ ਸਚਾਈ ਦੇ ਰਸਤੇ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਪਰਾਚੀਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਈ ਉਦਾਹਰਣਾਂ ਉਧਰਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਦੁਰਾਚਾਰੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਪਰ ਅੰਤ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੰਚਿਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਤੇ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਵੀ ਭੁਗਤਣੀ ਪਈ।²⁴ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਸਤੱਧਾਰੀ ਵਰਗ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਖਰਿਚ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਖਣਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਖੁਸ਼ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੇ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਨਾਸ਼ ਲਈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਜੇਕਰ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਫਰਜ਼ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਫਲ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਆ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਹੀ ਸੇਚ ਤੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇਣ ਤੇ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਅਲਹਿਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਕਿਸਮ ਨਾਲ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਰਜਾ ਦਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਦੇਵੀ ਫਰਜ਼ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਗੀਰ ਦੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਿਆਨਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇਣਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਸੀ।

ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਉੱਪਰ ਬਾਬਰ ਦੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਬੜੇ ਦੁਖ ਤੇ ਬੇਪਤੀ ਸਹਾਰਨੀ ਪਈ। ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਦਾ ਪਰਜਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦੇਸੀ ਹਮਲਾਆਵਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਇਕ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਫਰਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਏਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖ-ਦਰਦ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਬਰਥਾਦੀ ਲਈ, ਲੋਧੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਠਹਿਰਾਇਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਬੜੀ ਸਖਤ ਨਿਖੇਧੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਭੋਲੇ-ਭਾਲੇ, ਨਿਆਸਰੇ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਸਤਰਹੀਣ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਕਹਿਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਕਰਕੇ

ਅਣ-ਮਨੁਖੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।²⁵ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਨਿਖੇਧੀ ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਦੇ ਅਣ-ਉਚਿਤ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਦੀ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਏ ਵਿਅਕਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਦਸਤ-ਬਰਦਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਹੋਏ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਸ਼ਾਬਰ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਿਮਾਨਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਸੋਧ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਿਥੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਰਵਈਏ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਾਮਦੀ ਤੇ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰਾਨਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਬਿੰਤਾਕੁਰ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਪਰਜਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਗਰਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਪਰਜਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਨਾਲ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਨਿਯਮਿਤ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਦਾ ਹੈ।²⁶ ਪਰ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪਰਜਾ ਦੇ ਅਣਉਚਿਤ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਫ਼ਿਕਰਮੰਦ ਸਨ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਲੋਕ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਈ ਨਜ਼ਾਇਜ਼ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ।²⁷ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਜਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਬੇ-ਇਜ਼ਤੀ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਅਣਖ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ।²⁸ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਉੱਚੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਲਈ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਿਭਾਵਰ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਭਨੀਕ ਕਾਰਨਾਮਾ ਦੱਸਿਆ।²⁹ ਪਰਜਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਰਪਣਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਨਿਡਰ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਸਚ ਨੂੰ ਸਚ ਕਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਉੱਤੇ ਬਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ।³⁰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਰਜਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਉੱਚੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਪਹਿਲ-ਕਦਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਰਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਝਿਜਕ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਖ਼ੱਟੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਬਗ਼ਾਵਤ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਿਮ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸਵੈਰਖਿਆ ਹਿਤ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਬੀਜ ਵਿਦਮਾਨ ਸਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਬੀਜ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਸੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਚੇਤੰਨ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ :- ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਆਗਮਨ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਵ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਉੱਪਰ ਬੜਾ ਨਕਾਰਾਤਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਦੇਵੀ-ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਦ-ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਿਰੰਕੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪਰਜਾ ਕਰਮ-ਫਲ ਦੇ ਅੰਧ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਜਕੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜ਼ੁਲਮੇ-ਸਿਤਮ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸਮਤ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਸਬਰ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅੰਧ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਜਣ ਤੇ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡੀ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ

ਪਾਈ।³¹ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਕਠੋਰਤਾ ਨੇ ਨੀਵੇਂ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਰਣ-ਆਸ਼ਰਮ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਕੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਪਰ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾ ਰੱਖੀ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਜਾਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਦੇਵੀ-ਵਿਧਾਨ ਤੇ ਕਰਮ-ਫਲ ਦੀ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਰੱਦ ਕੀਤਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਨੀਵੇਂ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਤੇ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਆਤਮ-ਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਰਣਾ ਤੇ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਤੇ ਭਰਾਤਰੀਭਾਵ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਜਥੇਬੰਦਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਖੁਲ੍ਹ ਗਏ। ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਸੰਗਤ ਤੇ ਪੰਗਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਉੱਪਰ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ ਬੰਦਸ਼ਾਂ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਆਉਣੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋਈ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉ ਸੀ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਤੀ-ਵੰਡ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੇਸ਼ਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਕਸ਼ੱਤਰੀਆਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਸੀ। ਨੀਵੀਆਂ ਜਾਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਪੇਸ਼ਾ ਅਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਹਮਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਈ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਪਾ ਸਕਦੇ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਉਹ ਰਾਜਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਉਤਰਾਧਿਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਜੰਗਾਂ-ਜੁੱਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਪ-ਬੁੱਪੀਤੇ ਦੇਖਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਿਤ-ਹਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਦਿਲਚਸਪੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਛੂਆ-ਛਾਤ ਤੇ ਭਿੱਟ-ਵਹਿਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਜ-ਕੁਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਬੜੀਆਂ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਕਰ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਸਨ।³² ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਚ-ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਲਕਸ਼ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਆ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜੁਝਾਰੂ ਗੁਣ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮਨੋਬਲ, ਸਰੀਰਕ ਬਲ, ਸਾਹਸ, ਨਿਡਰਤਾ, ਸਹਿਣ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀ, ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ।³³ ਭਾਰਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਬਿਨ ਕਾਸਿਮ ਦੇ ਅਰਬ ਹਮਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਬੇਈ ਸਵਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ, ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਭੱਜ ਗਏ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਖੂਨ-ਖਰਾਬਾ ਵਿਵਰਜਿਤ ਸੀ।³⁴ ਮੈਕਸਮੂਲਰ ਨੇ ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿਚ ਠੀਕ ਹੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਚ-ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਯੋਗ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਬੜੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ।³⁵

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਵਰਗ-ਵੰਡ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪਹਿਲੋਂ ਹੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੰਮ-ਧੰਦੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਵੀਕਾਰਿਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਵਰਗ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਧੰਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਕੀ ਤੇ ਈਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋੜਵੰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ,

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੁਲ੍ਹ ਹੈ। ਦੇਸ਼ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਭਾਈਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਿੱਮੇਵਾਰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਾ ਆਰਦਸ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਨ-ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ, ਪ੍ਰੇਮ-ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਜ਼ਤ-ਆਬਰੂ ਤੇ ਜਾਨ-ਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ, ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਜਰਵਾਣਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੂੰਹ ਤੋੜ ਜਵਾਬ ਦੇਣ, ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਤੇ ਲਾਚਾਰੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੰਜੀਰਾਂ ਤੋੜਨ ਭਾਵ ਸਵੈਰੱਖਿਆ ਹਿਤ ਸ਼ਸਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਪਾਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਿਆ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਫ਼ੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਅਧੀਨ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਦਲਿਤ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਬਲਕਿ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਜੰਗੀ ਖੇਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਰਤਬ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਜਨ-ਜੀਵਨ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਕੋਝੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਕਾਰਣ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਸਾਹਸਹੀਣਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਹੰਥਲਾ ਸਨ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਧਰਮ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਤਿ ਤੇ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਤਿਆਗ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ। ਲਗਭਗ ਸਾਰੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੱਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਰਮ-ਲਕਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਸੰਨਿਆਸ ਦੀ ਉਪਯੋਗਤਾ ਤੇ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਵਿਰਤੀ ਮਾਰਗ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਆ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਲੋਕ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਧਾਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਦਿਲਚਸਪੀ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਪਰਾਮਤਾ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਲਗੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਗਵਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਭਾਂਜਵਾਦੀ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਲਾਪਰਵਾਹ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਤ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਹਮਲਾਆਵਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਬਲ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਸਹੀਣ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।³⁶ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਜਨ-ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਸਨਮਾਨਜਨਕ ਸਥਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਬੜਾ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਅੰਗ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸੰਕਟ ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਧਾਂ, ਸੰਤਾਂ, ਜੋਗੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸੂਫ਼ੀ-ਪੀਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਲਾਹ ਮਸ਼ਵਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਕਸਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਸ਼ਰਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਖਾਨਕਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਕਰਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਲਈ ਧਰਮ-ਅਰਥ ਜਾਗ੍ਰੀਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਰਿਆਇਤਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਇਵਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਉਮੀਦ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਮੁਆਮਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ। ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲਾਪਰਵਾਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਕ ਵਰਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰਜਾ ਉੱਪਰ ਵਧੀਕੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਨਿਜੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਦਾਸੀਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਡੁਬੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸ਼ਿੱਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੋਰ ਗਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਜਾ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਸਮੇਂ

ਦੇ ਬੀਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਘਰ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ-ਖੇਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਿਲਚਸਪੀ ਤੇ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਪਿਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਨਿਰੰਕੁਸ਼ ਤੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਰਾਚਾਰੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕੇ ਤੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰੇ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਨ ਤੇ ਪਰਜਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ :- ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਦਿਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਲੱਛਣਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੈਗੰਬਰੀ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦਾ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦਰਜਾ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਦੈਵੀ-ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਹੈ। ਪੈਗੰਬਰੀ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਬ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਣੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਨਵੇਂ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਦੈਵੀ-ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੱਸ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।³⁷ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਰਹੱਸਵਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਇਕ ਪੈਗੰਬਰ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੰਗਾਂ ਜੁਧਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪੈਗੰਬਰੀ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਜ਼ਰ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਦੈਵੀ-ਹਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਵੈਰ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਨਿਆਸਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਸਰਾ, ਨਿਪਾਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੱਤ, ਨਿਓਣਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਓਟ ਤੇ ਨਿਮਾਣਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ, ਦਰਦ ਤੇ ਕਲੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੇ ਕਸ਼ਟ ਤੋਂ ਰਖਵਾਲੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਰੱਬ ਬਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ 'ਅਸੁਰ ਸੰਘਾਰਣ' ਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ।³⁸ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਸਰਬ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਦੈਵੀ-ਹਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਜਣ ਤੇ ਸਿਮਰਣ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰਭੈਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਡਟਣ ਦਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਬਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ-ਮਨੋਰਥ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਜਗਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਪਰਾਮਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ, ਸੰਨਿਆਸ, ਤਪ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਸਥਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਚਿੰਤਕਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਭਿਤ ਜਾਂ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਨਕਾਰਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਿਕ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਜਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਕਰਮ-ਭੂਮੀ ਭਾਵ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਦੀ ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾ

ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਾਰਜ-ਖੇਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਤੇ ਅਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੰਡਦਾ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਨ ਤੇ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਿਕ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਫਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਹਿਤ ਸੁਚਾਰੂ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਖੇਤਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਦਾਇਰੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਹੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਗੈਰ ਜਾਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਬਗੈਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਅਵੱਲੋਂ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਲਈ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਲਚਸਪੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਜਾਂ ਪਾਪ ਨਹੀਂ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਵੀ-ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਫਰਜ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਰਗੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਦੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਉਮੀਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬਦੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਮੋੜ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਗੁਣਾ ਜਾਂ ਜੰਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਨਾਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਬੈਠ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਸੋਚੇ ਕਿ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਬਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਉਮੀਦ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖੇ ਕਿ ਅੰਤ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੇਵੀ-ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਬਖਸ਼ੇਗਾ।³⁹

ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ :- ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਰਣਿਤ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਜੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਹਾਲੇ ਤੱਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਤੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਵੈ-ਰਖਿਆ ਹਿਤ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਰਸਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਤੋਰਿਆ। ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਟਕਰਾਅ ਅਨਿਵਾਰੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਦਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਰੂਪ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਸਮਕਾਲੀਨ ਪਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਸਵੈਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਹੋਂਦ ਖਤਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪਾਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਲਪ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ, ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਦੀ ਨਾਲ

ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਉਚਿਤ ਸਮਝਿਆ। ਜੇਕਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੇ ਬਦੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਰਸਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਸਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਕਦਮ ਉਠਾਏ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਰਹਨੁਮਾਈ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਰੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਨੇਤਾ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ-ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਢੰਗ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਮੀਰੀ ਤੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਤਲਵਾਰਾਂ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲਈਆਂ।⁴⁰ ਮੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਲਖਾਇਕ ਅਤੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਸੀ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਚੀ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਵੈ-ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਲਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਈ ਹਿਦਾਇਤਾਂ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਜਤਨ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੇਕਰ ਕੋਈ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਜੋ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਅੰਤਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੋਟ ਕੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਸਿੱਖੀ-ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਅੰਗ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ। ਮੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਤੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰਹਿਬਰ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦੁਨੀ ਤੇ ਦੁਨੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਨਿਰੂਪਣ ਗੁਰੂ-ਪਦ ਦੀ ਇਕੋ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅਨਿੱਖੜ ਅੰਗ ਹਨ। ਜਿੱਥੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ, ਸਮਾਜ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ, ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖਰੇ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਣ ਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਸੀ ਉਥੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ, ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਅਨਿੱਖੜ ਅੰਗ ਹਨ।⁴¹ ਦੂਜੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਐਲਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਜਤਾਇਆ ਕਿ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਨਾ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਲਵਾਰਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦੁਨੀ ਤੇ ਦੁਨੀ ਭਾਵ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਣ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਹ-ਨੁਮਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਿਰੂਪਣ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾਏ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਪਾਸ ਫ਼ੈਰਿਆਦ ਕਰਨ

ਜਾਂ ਰਾਹ-ਨੁਮਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ :- ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤਿ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਇਸ ਇਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਤੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਉਪਰੰਤ 1663 ਬਿ. ਦੇ ਹਾੜ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਰਾਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਲਈ ਦਸਤਾਰ-ਬੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ ਹੋਈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਪੰਚਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਮੁਖੀ ਮਸੰਦ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ।⁴² ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੋਸ਼ੇਖਾਨੇ ਭੇਜਣ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਤਲਵਾਰਾਂ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲਈਆਂ। ਮੁਖੀ ਮਸੰਦਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ।⁴³ ਪਰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਰਵਾਈਏ ਕਾਰਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਭਲੀਭਾਂਤ ਜਾਣੂ ਸਨ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਪੱਧਰ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ 5 ਹਾੜ 1663 ਬਿ. ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦਾ ਮਹਾਨ ਉਦਮ ਕੀਤਾ।⁴⁴ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਖੁਦ ਰੱਖੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਵਾਇ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਰ-ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ।⁴⁵

ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਨ, ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਪਰ ਉੱਚਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਜੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੋਮੇ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਉੱਭਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਪਿਛੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਤੱਥ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਾਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਤਾਜ਼ ਜਾਂ ਤਖਤ ਨਾਲ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮੁਗਲ ਰਾਜ ਜਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰਨ। ਏਥੇ ਇਹ ਉਲੇਖ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਇਕ ਇਤਫ਼ਾਕੀਆ ਘਟਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਬਲਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਦੇਵੀ-ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਸੀ।

ਸੈਨਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ :- ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 10 ਹਾੜ 1663 ਬਿ. ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਤਖਤਨਸ਼ੀਨੀ ਹੋਈ।⁴⁶ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਕਲਗੀ ਵੀ ਸਜਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਹੋਰ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਤਲਵਾਰਾਂ

ਵੀ ਪਹਿਨੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਸਨ।⁴⁷ ਜਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਦੀ ਬਾਕਾਇਦਾ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪੂਰੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਠਾਠ-ਥਾਠ ਸਹਿਤ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਸੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਤਾਂ ਭੱਟਾਂ ਤੇ ਢਾਡੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਗਾਈਆਂ।⁴⁸ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਤਕਰਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਭਜਨ-ਬੰਦਗੀ ਵਿਚ ਲੀਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਵੇਰ ਹੋਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਅਨੰਦ ਮਾਣਦੇ। ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ।⁴⁹ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਦੇਸਾਂ-ਦੇਸਾਂਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਏਸ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਮੁਖੀ ਮਸੰਦ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਸਮੇਤ ਦਸਵੰਧ ਤੇ ਕਾਰ-ਸੇਵਾ ਵੀ ਏਸੇ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਭੇਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਤੇ ਨਿਜੀ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਜੇ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਜੀ ਤੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਕ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਸੁਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਝਗੜੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਨਿਪਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ।⁵⁰ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇੰਜ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ :-

ਸਾਂਤ ਰੂਪ ਹਵੈ ਮੈਂ ਰਹੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਕੇ ਮਾਹਿ।

ਰਜੇ ਰੂਪ ਇਹ ਠਾਂ ਰਹੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇ।⁵¹

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਯਾਦਾ ਬੰਨਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਪੁਰੋਧਰ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਸੌਂਪੀ।⁵² ਇਕ ਕਿਸਮ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਸ ਪਦ ਉੱਪਰ ਸੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਦੂਰ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਪਰਮ ਦੇ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਨ੍ਹੇ ਸੋਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੇ ਸੂਖਮ ਭੇਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣੂੰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਹੀ ਨਵਿਰਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਤੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਣੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਰ-ਰਸ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਜੋਧਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੂਰਮਗਤੀ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨਾਮਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ, ਬਦੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਗਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਤੇਰੀ। ਇਸ ਕੰਮ ਲਈ ਸੁਰਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਸੀ ਅਬਦੁਲੇ ਤੇ ਨਬੇ ਮਲੋਂ ਢਾਡੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ।⁵³ ਜੋਸ਼ੀਲੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਗਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਭੈ-ਭੀਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਾਸ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਵਾਂ ਜੋਸ਼ ਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਅਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਨਿਭਾਉਣੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇੰਜ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ

ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਗੁੰਮ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਆਤਮ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਬਹਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਕਟਕਾਲੀਨ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਮਨੋਬਲ ਨੂੰ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਥੇਬੰਦ ਕਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਵਸ਼ਰਕਤਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂਤਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮੇ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਧਨ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਤੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ। ਹੁਕਮ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਧੀਆਂ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਤੇ ਉੱਤਮ ਨਸਲ ਦੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਵੇਗਾ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਪਾਤਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।⁵⁴ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਦਖਲ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਵੈ-ਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੁਗਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਸਵੈ-ਨਿਰਭਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਅਰਪਣ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਮਾਥੇ ਮਾਲਵੇ ਤੇ ਦੁਆਬੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ 400 ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਹਾਜ਼ਿਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਜੰਗੀ ਸਾਜੇ-ਸਾਮਾਨ ਵੀ ਨਾਲੇ-ਨਾਲ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੈ ਸੈ ਦੇ ਜਥਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਉੱਪਰ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।⁵⁵ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਘੋੜਾ ਤੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਢਲਾ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਇਆ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ 52 ਅੰਗ ਰੱਖਿਅਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਸੀ।⁵⁶ ਦਬਿਸਤਾਨ-ਏ-ਮਜ਼ਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ 700 ਘੋੜੇ, 300 ਘੋੜ ਸਵਾਰ ਤੇ 60 ਤੋਪਚੀ ਸਨ।⁵⁷ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੱਖਪਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਥਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕੱਢਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਆ ਕੇ ਪਨਾਹ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ।⁵⁸ ਦਲਿਤ ਵਰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਗੰਢਾਰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪੇਸ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਸਮਝਦੀ, ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗੇ।⁵⁹ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜਜਬੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਵੈ-ਇਛਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਿਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਉਜਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਅਰਪਣ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਤੇ ਪਠਾਨ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਉੱਪਰ ਭਰਤੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੀ ਹਿਵਾਜ਼ਤ ਲਈ ਲੋਹਗੜ੍ਹ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ।⁶⁰

ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਾਧਨ ਮੁਹਈਆ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ, ਜੰਗਜੂ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਿਖਲਾਈ ਦੇ ਅਵਸਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਵਸ਼ਕਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਜੰਗੀ ਖੇਡਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਰਤਬ ਦਿਖਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ।⁶¹ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਖੇਡਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਚੰਗੀ ਨਸਲ ਦੇ ਘੋੜੇ, ਕੁੱਤੇ ਤੇ ਬਾਜ ਪਾਲਣੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਕੀਤੇ।⁶² ਜੰਗੀ ਖੇਡਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਪਰਿਪਾਟੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਟ-ਪੁਸ਼ਟ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜੰਗੀ ਮਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਿਖਲਾਈ ਦਾ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦੇ ਅੰਧ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਕਾਰਣ ਪਏ ਭੁਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਤਮ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜੁਝਾਰੂ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨੀ ਆਸਾਨ ਹੋ ਗਈ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਆਰੰਭ ਕੀਤੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਯਕੀਨ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਰਜ਼ ਵਜੋਂ ਅਦਾ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਹਿਜੇ-ਸਹਿਜੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਵੈ-ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹਿਤ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਪਾਸ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਟੱਕੌਰ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਣਖ ਦੀ ਲੋਂ ਪਰਜਵਲਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਬੀਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਲਕਿ ਚਾਈਂ ਚਾਈਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ-ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਰਾਜ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਲਾਲਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਲਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ (ਗੁਰੂ) ਲਈ ਮਰ-ਮਿਟਣ ਦੀ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਸੀ।⁶³ ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਪਵਿਤਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਾਖੀ ਲਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਕੰਥਾ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਈ ਲਾਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਕਾਰਨਾਮੇ ਵਿਖਾਏ ਹਨ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਬੜਾ ਅਹਿਮ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਬਦੀ ਤੇ ਬੇ-ਇਨਸਾਫੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਫ਼ਲਸਫ਼ੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਲੱਭੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਨਾਲ ਬੜਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ :- ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਮਲ ਕਾਰਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਤਕਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਸਬਤ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਆਉਣੀ ਬੜੀ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਵਰਗੇ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਬਸਤਰ ਪਹਿਨ ਕੇ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਉੱਪਰ ਕਲਗੀ ਲਾਉਣੀ ਅਰੰਭ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਨੱਥਤ, ਛਤਰ, ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ, ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ।⁶⁴ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਬਵੰਜਾ ਅੰਗ ਰੱਖਿਅਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਤਤਪਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਗਲ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ

ਜੀ ਨੂੰ 'ਸੱਚਾ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹ' ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ।⁶⁵ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸਾਧਨ ਤੇ ਜੰਗੀ ਸਾਜ਼ੋ-ਸਾਮਾਨ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੀਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦਾਅਵਾ, ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ, ਰਾਜਸੀ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਤਖਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਬੈਠਣਾ, ਦਰਬਾਰ ਲਗਾਉਣਾ, ਨੰਬਰ, ਛਤਰ, ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ, ਫੌਜ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਕਰਨੇ, ਆਦਿ ਨੇ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਸ਼ਾਨੋ-ਸ਼ੌਕਤ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਕ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਾਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।⁶⁶ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਸੀ। ਏਥੇ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉਲੇਖਨੀਯ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੱਧੋ-ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਤੋਂ ਚਾਰ ਫੁੱਟ ਉੱਚੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਣ ਉੱਪਰ ਬੈਠਣਾ, ਨੰਬਰ, ਛਤਰ, ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ, ਫੌਜ, ਸ਼ਸਤਰ, ਘੋੜੇ, ਹਾਥੀ ਤੇ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਾ, ਆਦਿ ਰੱਖਣਾ, ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਖਵੀਆਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਖੇਡਣਾ, ਆਦਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਹਾਕਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਅਮੀਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਸੀ।⁶⁷ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਬਗੈਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵਿਵਰਜਿਤ ਸੀ। ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੁਗਲ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਖਤ ਤਾੜਨਾ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ।⁶⁸ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਮੱਤਵ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਸਮਝਦੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਗੂ ਦੇ ਵੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ। ਦੂਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਗੂ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਿਮਾਨਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਕਾਰਣ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਮੁਦਾਇ ਲਈ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਖਤਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਗਠਨ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸੰਦੇਹ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਰੁਝੇਵਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਫਰਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਟਿਕ ਕੇ ਨਾ ਬੈਠਣਾ, ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਲੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਕੈਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਮਨਸੂਬੇ, ਬੇ-ਖੱਛ ਸਰਗਰਮੀਆਂ, ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਖੇਡਾਂ, ਦੁਸ਼ਟਾਂ (ਸਿਖ ਸੈਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ) ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ, ਆਦਿ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਸ਼ਸ਼ੇਪੰਜ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਆਖਿਰ ਸਚਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਸਹਿ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਨ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ।⁶⁹ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਹੁਚੀ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਚੰਦਨ ਦੇ ਪਾਸ ਸੱਪ, ਘਰ ਦੇ ਬੂਹੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਜੰਦਰਾ ਜਾਂ ਕੁੱਤਾ, ਖੇਤੀ ਦੇ ਆਸੇ-ਪਾਸੇ ਵਾੜ ਤੇ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਗਿਰਦ ਕਿੱਕਰ, ਰਾਖੀ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਰਖਵਾਲੀ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਨਾ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ।⁷⁰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਨਲੀਏਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗਿਰੀ, ਸੱਪ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਣੀ, ਹਿਰਨ ਦੇ ਢਿੱਡ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਸਤੂਰੀ, ਲੋਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਧਣ ਲਈ ਅਹਿਰਣ, ਪਾਣੀ ਕੱਢਣ ਲਈ ਮਸ਼ਕ ਨੂੰ ਗਲ ਤੋਂ ਬੰਨਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਿਵੇਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਾਇਲ ਹੈ।⁷¹ ਭਾਵ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਣ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਕਲਿਆਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਾਬਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੁਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਤੇ ਮਰਾਠਾ ਸੰਤ ਸਮਰਥ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੈਨਾ, ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਤੇ ਘੋੜਿਆਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਹੋਰਾਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਸੰਤ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਹਉਂ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਥਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਗਾਈ ਪਰ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਸਾਧੂ ਬੇ। ਤੁਮ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰੇ ਹੋਨ, ਘੋੜੇ ਫੌਜ ਰਾਖੀ ਹੈ। ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਹਾਵਤਾ ਹੈ ਕੇਸਾ ਸਾਧੂ ਹੈ।" ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਬਾਤਨ ਫਕੀਰੀ ਜਾਹਰ ਅਮੀਰੀ, ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਗਰੀਬ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਰਵਾਣੇ ਦੀ ਭਖਿਆ। ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਿਆਗਿਆ ਥਾ ਮਾਯਾ ਤਿਆਗੀ ਥੀ।" ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਉੱਤਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਭੱਜਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸੰਤ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਇਹ ਬਾਤ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਮਨ ਭਾਵਤੀ ਹੈ।"⁷² ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੈਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਪੱਖ ਸਵੈ-ਨਿਰਭਰ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਸੀ ਦੂਜੇ, ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਗਰੀਬ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਜਰਵਾਣੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਸ ਲਈ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਭਾਵ ਕਦਾਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਫ਼ੇਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਤੇ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਡੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ।⁷³ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਘੱਟ ਭਗਤੀ-ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਫਰਕ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਨਿੱਡਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਬਹਾਦਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕੌਮ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ।⁷⁴ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਗਠਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਭਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜੇਕਰ ਮਾਨਵਤਾ ਦੇ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ। ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਰੱਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਦਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਖ਼ਾਤਰ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਲਈ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਬਲਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸੰਚਾਲਨ ਲਈ ਭਗਤੀ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਤ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ-ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਮਬੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਵੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਰੰਸ਼ :- ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਬਲੇ ਸਿਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ, ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਿਖ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਰਾਜ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ

ਬਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਅਧੂਰੀ ਸਮਝ ਕਾਰਣ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਪੂਰਵਾਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਤੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਖ਼ਿੱਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੈ-ਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਨਿਰਭਰ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਉਚਿਤ ਸਮਝਿਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਬਦੀ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਆਪਸੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਰਵਈਏ ਨੂੰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੀਰੀ ਤੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਨੀਤੀ ਉਪਰ ਅਮਲ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਤੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਤੋਂ ਅਥਾਹ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਰਵਈਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਪਰਾਮਤਾ ਜਾ ਬੇਬਸੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਲਈ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਲੜੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਰਬਉੱਚ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਬੜਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। 18ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਗੁਰਮਤਾ, ਦਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਆਦਿ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਆਧਾਰਸ਼ਿਲਾ ਸਾਬਿਤ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਅਣਗੋਲਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।

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ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਤੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ

ਪ੍ਰਭਜੋਤ ਕੌਰ

ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਕਹਾਵਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world", ਭਾਵ ਪੰਝੂੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਝੂਟੇ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਾਂ ਹੀ ਅਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਜ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੀਵਨੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਭਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲੋਕ ਕਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੰਨ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨੇ ਉਦੇ ਕੱਟ ਲਿਆ, ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਗਈ। ਹੋਰਾਨ ਹੋਈ ਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਹੇ ਮਾਂ, ਅੱਜ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਦੀ ਹਵਾ ਨਾ ਖਾਣੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਚੋਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਮਨਾ ਕਰਦੀ, ਜਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਦੇ ਬਸਤੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਲਮ ਚੁਰਾ ਕੇ ਲਿਆਇਆ ਸੀ।"

ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਘਾਤਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਾਸ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਥੜੀ ਹੀ ਸੂਖਮ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਕੰਮ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਾਤਾ ਦੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਹੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਅਰਾ ਲਗਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਸੋ ਕਿਉਂ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ", ਨਿਰਕਲੰਕ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਮਾਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕਲੰਕਣੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ? ਪਰ ਅਫਸੋਸ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਲੰਕਣੀ, ਬਾਘਣ, ਵਿਸ਼ ਦੀ ਗੰਦਲ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਰ ਦੀ ਜੁੱਤੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਹੋਰ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ, ਅਗਾਹਵਧੂ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਪਛਮੀ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਵੀ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਦ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਰਜਾ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਜਿਗਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਸੁਕਰਾਤ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਸਤੂ ਵਰਗੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਫਿਲਾਸਫਰ ਵੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਸਾਫ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕੇ। ਸੁਕਰਾਤ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, "The courage of a man and that of a woman are not the same. The courage of a man is shown in command and that of a woman in obeying". ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਰਸਤੂ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, "Woman is an unfinished man left standing on a lower step in the scale of development. The male is by nature superior and female inferior, the one is ruler and the other ruled. Woman is weak of will and, therefore, incapable of independence of character and position."

ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਰਹੀ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਗੂ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਸ਼ ਵੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਨਸਾਫ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਇਸਲਾਮ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਪਤਨੀਆ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਪਦਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਗੰਤਮ ਬੁੱਧ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚੇਲੇ ਆਨੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਘ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਅਤੇ ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਘ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੇਰ ਤੱਕ ਕਾਇਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕੇਗਾ।

ਜੇ Goethe ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੂਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਸੈਕਸਪੀਅਰ ਕਹਿ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੂ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਦੇ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਕੂੜ ਦੀ ਮੂਰਤ ਹੈ। ਜੈਨੀ ਗਰੰਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਪਟੀ ਤੱਕ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਤੁਲਸੀ ਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਹੱਦ ਮੁਕਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਗਵਾਹ, ਸ਼ੂਦਰ ਅਤੇ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਦੁਨੀਆ ਭਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਫੈਲੇ ਇਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਵੀ ਇਸਾਈ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਦਰੀ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ। ਰਿਵਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਘਟੀਆ ਹੈ। ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ (as late as) 1882 ਵਿੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਵੋਟ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ 1918 ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ।

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਪਿੱਠਝੂਮੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੱਜ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਅਰਾ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਰਗਾ ਕਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਅਸੀਸ ਸਦਕਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ, ਰਾਗੀ, ਢਾਡੀ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਬਣ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਵੀ ਐਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਉਤਨੀ ਹੀ ਹੱਕਦਾਰ ਹੈ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਪੁਰਸ਼। ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਸਾਏ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ।

ਆਦਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਜਾਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਮਾਣ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ-ਪੱਖ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਦ ਦੀ ਪੱਥ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮਰਦ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਸੁਹਾਗਣ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪੁੱਛੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਹੁਪਤੀ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ:

“ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ, ਵਾਹੇ ਕਿਨੀ ਬਾਤੀ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ।”

ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਪਰੀਅਰ ਤੋਂ ਲਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਨਫੀਰੀਅਰ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਭਾਵ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ

ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹਨ:

“ਜਾਇ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ, ਤੁਸੀ ਗਣਿਆ ਕਿਨੀ ਗੁਣੀ,
ਸਹਿਜ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੀਗਾਰਿਆ, ਮਿੱਠਾ ਬੋਲਨੀ।”

.....
“ਨਿਵਣ ਸੁ ਅਖੌਰ, ਖਵਣ ਗੁਣ, ਜਿਹਥਾ ਮਣੀਆ ਮੰਤ,
ਏ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਭੈਣੇ ਵਸ ਕਰ, ਤਾਂ ਵਸਿ ਆਵੀ ਕੰਤ।”

ਸਹਿਜ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਦਾ ਸੀਗਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ, ਮਿੱਠਾ ਬੋਲਣਾ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨੀ, ਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਵਡਾ ਜਿਗਰਾ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਗੁਣ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਪਤੀ-ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸਨੇ ਪਤੀ-ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਉਸ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਔਖਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕੇਵਲ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਹੀ ਬਦਲਣੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਮਾਦਾ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਠਰ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੈ, ਜਦੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਾਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਅਸਫਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ।

“ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ਼ ਹਮਹ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ,
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਭੁਰਦਨ ਬ-ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ।”

ਭਾਵ ਜਦੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਹਲੀਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁਲਮ ਕਾਬੂ ਨਾ ਆਏ ਤਾਂ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਚੁੱਕਣਾ, ਭਾਵ ਨਰ ਗੁਣ ਅਪਨਾਉਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਯਾਦ ਰਹੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਸਹਿਜ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਂਤਮਈ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਦਾ ਮਨ ਨਾ ਪਸੀਛਿਆ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਤੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਸੁਆਲ ਹੈ, ਕੇਵਲ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਗੁਣ ਹੀ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੇਵਲ ਸੁਹਾਗਣ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਹੀ ਜਿਸਦਾ “ਅੰਦਰ ਸਚੁ ਮੁਖੰ ਉਜਾਲਾ” ਹੈ ਉਹ ਹੀ “ਖਸਮੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ” ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਰੂਪ ਚਿਤਰੇ ਹਨ, ਕੁਚਜੀ, ਸੁਚਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ। ਪੰਨਾ 762 ਤੇ ਕੁਚਜੀ ਦੇ ਲੱਛਣ ਦੱਸਦਿਆਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਾਇਆ ਨਾਲ, ਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਮਤਲਬ ਰੱਖਦੀ ਹੈ, ਪਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ।

“ਸੁਇਨਾ ਰੂਪਾ ਰੰਗੁਲਾ ਮੋਤੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਿਕੁ ਜੀਉ।
ਸੇ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਹਿ ਦਿਤੀਆ, ਮੈ ਤਿਨ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਇਆ ਚਿਤੁ ਜੀਉ।”
“ਮੰਦਰ ਮਿਟੀ ਸੰਦੜੇ, ਪਥਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ।
ਹਉ ਏਨੀ ਟੋਲੀ ਭੁਲੀਅਸ, ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਤ ਨ ਥੈਨੀ ਪਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ।”

ਅੱਜ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਦੇਖੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਪਤੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾ ਸਕਦੀ, ਅਤੇ ਹਾਲਤ ਕਈ ਵੇਰ ਤਲਾਕ ਤਕ ਵੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। 'ਮਾਇਆਧਾਰੀ ਅਤਿ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਬੋਲਾ' ਮਨੁੱਖ ਇਸੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 'ਸੁਚੱਜੀ' ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਪਤੀ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਰਾਸ ਹੈ, ਪੁੱਜੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਹਰ ਹਾਲ ਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੈ:

“ਜਾ ਤੂ ਤਾਂ ਮੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ, ਤੂ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ।

ਤੁਧੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹਉ ਸੁਖਿ ਵਸਾ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਾਥਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ”।

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਲਈ ਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਭੀਖ ਮੰਗਣੀ ਪਵੇ, ਇਕੋ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ।

ਭਾਣੈ ਤਖਤਿ ਵਡਾਈਆ, ਭਾਣੈ ਭੀਖ ਉਦਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ।

ਭਾਣੈ ਸੇ ਸਹੁ ਰੰਗੁਲਾ, ਸਿਫਤਿ ਰਤਾ ਗੁਣਤਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ।

ਪਰ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਸਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਕ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ, ਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦੀ। ਆਮ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਸਲਾ ਛੱਡ, ਬਦਲਾ ਲਉ ਨੀਤੀ ਧਾਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਤਬਾਹ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ 'ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ' ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਲਭਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਲੋੜ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਰਿਜ ਕਾਉਂਸਲਰ ਕੋਲ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਵਸਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਫਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੀ 'ਸੁਚੱਜੀ' ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ 'ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ' ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। 'ਸੁਚੱਜੀ' ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਫਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ:

“ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੜਾ, ਤਿਸੁ ਨਿਵਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਲਾਗਉ ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ।

ਆਖਾ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜੀਅ ਕੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਜਣੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ।

ਸੇਈ ਦੀਸਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੜਾ, ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਅਨਤ ਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ।”

ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਹੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਉਹ ਆਖਰ;

“ਇਉ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਾਵੜਾ, ਨਹ ਲਗੈ ਤਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਜੀਉ।”

ਅਜਿਹੀ 'ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ' ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਲਤ ਸਾਬਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਸਤਰੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਫਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ:

“ਲੋਕ ਵੇਦ ਗੁਣ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿੱਚ

ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੀ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੀ।”

ਭਾਵ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਅਰਪੰਗਨੀ ਹੀ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਲਈ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਦੁਆਰ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਵੀ 'ਔਰਤ ਈਮਾਨ' ਦਾ ਆਈਡੀਅਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਭਗਤ ਪੰਨੇ ਨੇ ਵੀ 'ਘਰ ਕੀ ਗੀਹਨ ਚੰਗੀ' ਮੰਗੀ ਸੀ।

ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਈ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ। ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਕਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਣੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਈਡਲਾਈਨਜ਼ ਹਨ:

"ਬਤੀਹ ਸੁਲਖਣੀ, ਸਚੁ ਸੰਤਤਿ ਪੂਤ।
ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ ਸੁਘੜ ਸਰੂਪ।
ਇਛ ਪੂਰੇ ਮਨ ਕੰਤ ਸੁਆਮੀ।
ਸਗਲ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਦੇਰ ਜੇਠਾਨੀ।
ਸਭ ਪਰਵਾਰੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਰੋਸਟ।
ਮਤੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਰ ਜੇਸਟ।
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਗਿਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੀ ਆਇ।
ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਖੇ ਸੁਖਿ ਵਿਹਾਇ।" (ਪੰਨਾ 370)

ਇਥੇ 'ਬਤੀਹ ਸੁਲਖਣੀ' ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ, ਸਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਇਸਤਰੀ। ਭਾਈ ਕਾਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਭਾ ਨੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਤੀਹ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ:-

ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ, ਸਵੱਛਤਾ, ਲੱਜਾ, ਚਤੁਰਾਈ, ਵਿਦਿਆ, ਸੇਵਾ, ਪਤਿਭਗਤੀ, ਦਇਆ, ਸਤਯ, ਪ੍ਰਿਯਬਾਣੀ, ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨਤਾ, ਨਿਮਰਤਾ, ਨਿਸ਼ਕਪਟਤਾ, ਏਕਤਾ, ਧੀਰਜ, ਧਰਮਨਿਸ਼ਠਾ, ਸੰਜਮ, ਉਦਾਰਤਾ, ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ, ਉੱਦਮ, ਸੁਰਵੀਰਤਾ, ਰਾਗ, ਕਾਵਯ, ਚਿਤ੍ਰ, ਔਸ਼ਧੀ, ਰਸੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਸੀਉਣ ਪਰੇਣ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ, ਘਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਸਤੂਆਂ ਦਾ ਯਥਾਯੋਗ ਸਿੰਗਾਰਣਾ, ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਨ, ਘਰ ਆਏ ਪ੍ਰਾਹੁਣਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ, ਸੰਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਣ ਆਦਿ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਕ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਉਤਮ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਬਣੇਗੀ- 'ਸਚ ਸੰਤਤਿ ਪੂਤ' ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ 'ਸਭ ਪਰਵਾਰੈ ਮਾਹਿ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਸਟ' ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਗਲਤ ਰਾਹ ਲੱਗੇ ਦੇਵਰ ਜੇਠ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮੱਤ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਰਸਤੇ ਪਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। 'ਮਤੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਰ ਜੇਠ' — ਪਖੰਡ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਵਤੀ ਹੋਏਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਮਤ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਬਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਦਾ ਹੀ 'ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਖੇ ਸੁਖ ਵਿਹਾਇ' ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਕੁਚਲੀ ਦੇ ਪੈਰ ਨਾਲ ਘਰ ਨਰਕ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਹੋਰ ਗੁਣ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਉਲੇਖ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੀ ਸੁਹਜ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਰਸੋਈ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੈ:-

"ਕਦਿ ਕਸੀਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਹਿ ਚੋਲੀ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ।

ਜੇ ਘਰੁ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਬੁਰਾ ਨਾ ਰਾਖਹਿ, ਹੋਵਹਿ ਕੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ।" (ਪੰਨਾ 1171)

ਫਿਰ ਰਸੋਈ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਦੱਸੀ ਹੈ।

"ਜਿਉ ਪੁਰਖੇ ਘਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੈ, ਅਤਿ ਲੋਚੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਭਾਇ।
ਬਹੁ ਰਸ ਸਾਲਟੇ ਸਵਾਰਦੀ, ਖਟਰਸ ਮੀਠੇ ਪਾਇ।" (ਪੰਨਾ 1413)

ਸੋ ਸੁਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਭੂਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ੇਵਰ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਮ ਦਰਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੁੜੀਮਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਵਰਤਣ ਦੀ ਮਨਾਹੀ ਹੈ। ਦਸ਼ਮ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ (ਜੂਨ 1699) 26 ਜੇਠ ਸੰਮਤ 1756 ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਬਲ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਜੋ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ, ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਰ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਜੋ ਖਾਸ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਰ ਭੇਜਿਆ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:

"ਭਾਦਨੀ ਤਥਾ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਮਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੇ ਮੇਲ ਨ ਰਖੇ।
ਮੀਟੇ, ਮਸੰਦ, ਰਾਮਰਾਈਏ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਨ ਬੇਜੇ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਨੀ,
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਰੱਖਣੀ।"

ਇਸ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮੇ ਦੀ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਅੱਜ ਜਨਮ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ? ਕੀ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਅਵੂਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ? ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀ ਸਲੂਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਾ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ।

ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ, ਕੰਨਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕੰਨਿਆਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਅਨੰਦ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ। ਜਿੱਥੇ 'ਹਮ ਘਰ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ' ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਜਣਾ ਦਾ ਮੇਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਜਣ ਜੋ ਸਾਥੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਪੰਚ ਮਿਲੇ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਇਆ' ਅਤੇ 'ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਾਜੇ' ਵਜਦੇ ਹਨ, ਅਤੇ ਇਥੇ ਜੰਜ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਰਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ 'ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਮਿਲ ਜੰਝ ਸੇਹੰਦੀ' ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਵੀ 'ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਰਚਾਇਆ ਪੂਰੇ' ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਗਿਲਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਵਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ।

ਦਾਜ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ ਉੱਤੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਕਰਾਰੀ ਚੇਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ:-

"ਹੋਰਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦਾਜੁ ਜਿ ਰਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਹਿ,
ਸੁ ਕੁੜ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਕਝੁ ਪਾਜੇ" (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਛੰਤ ਮ: 4)

ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਦਾਨ ਮੰਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਹਰੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਦਾ, ਹਰੀ ਤੇ ਟੇਕ ਦਾ:

"ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ, ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਮੇ ਦਾਜੇ।
ਹਰਿ ਕਪੜੇ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਭਾ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਵਰੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਕਾਜੇ।"

ਅੱਜ ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਵਾਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੱਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਦੀ ਸੋਝੀ ਆ ਜਾਏ, ਤਾਂ ਦਾਜ ਵਰਗੇ ਲਾਅਨਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੜੇ ਪੁੱਟੀ ਜਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੀਬੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਾਜ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੜਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਾ ਪਵੇ। ਲੋੜ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਝੀ ਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇੱਕ ਵਿਆਹੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਜੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪਤੀਵ੍ਰਤ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਕਿਆਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਪਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪਤਨੀਵ੍ਰਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦੋਂਦਿਆਂ 'ਏਕਾ' ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਪਾਪੀ ਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਬੜੇ ਸਖਤ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਰਤੇ ਹਨ:

ਘਰ ਕੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਤਿਆਗੇ ਅੰਧਾ। ਪਰਨਾਰੀ ਸਿਉਂ ਘਾਲੇ ਧੰਧਾ।।
ਪਾਪੀ ਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਅਗਨੇ ਮਾਹਿ। ਜਲਤ ਰਹੈ ਮਿਟਵੈ ਕਬ ਨਾਹਿ।"

.....

"ਕਿਆ ਗਾਲਾਇਓ ਭੂਛ, ਪਰਵੇਲਿ ਨ ਜੇਹੇ ਕੰਤ ਤੂ।
ਨਾਨਕ ਫੁਲਾ ਸੰਦੀ ਵਾੜਿ ਖਿੜਿਆ ਹਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਜਿਉ।"

ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਹੈ, ਪਤੀ ਪਤਨੀ, ਇਸਤਰੀ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ। ਅਫਸੋਸ! ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਪਤੀ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਕ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ rival ਬਣ ਬੈਠੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਨਾ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਲਈ ਮਿਸਟਰਸਟ (mistrust) ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਲਈ (ਫਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਲਈ ਨਹੀਂ) ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਉਠਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਬੀਜਿੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੱਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਮੀਂਹ ਪੈਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਕ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮਰਦ ਰੱਬ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ rival ਮਰਦ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਨਿਭਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਿਤਨੀ ਤਰਸਯੋਗ ਹਾਲਤ ਹੈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ, ਅੱਜ ਇਸ ਅਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਕਾਰਣ। ਇਸ ਅਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਸੰਤਾਨ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਟਰਸਟਵਰਦੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ?

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਖਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਜ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮਾਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਚਾਰੂ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਰ ਗੁਣ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੀ ਕਹਾਉਂਦੀ ਅਗਾਂਹਵਧੂ ਔਰਤ ਵੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਅਰਾ ਲਗਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੱਧੇ ਅੰਗ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਿਖੜ, ਲੰਗੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਦੀ 'ਵੋਮੈਨ ਲਿਬ ਮੂਵਮੈਂਟ' ਇਸਤਰੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਬੈਠੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਈ ਸ਼ੰਕਾਯੂ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੁਣੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਕਿ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਨੀਵਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਸਤਾ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਭਰ ਫਿਊਡਲ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਪੂਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰੋਂ ਉਹਲੇ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮਲਕ ਭਾਰੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਫਿਊਡਲ ਲੋਰਡ ਨੂੰ ਭਰੀ ਸਭਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨੀਗਿਆਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਦੀ ਦਲੇਰੀ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕੰਨਟਰਾਡਿਕਸ਼ਨ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਥੇ ਇਸਤਰੀ

ਦਾ 'ਨਿਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਅੱਖਰ' ਅਤੇ 'ਖਵਣ ਗੁਣ' ਉਸ ਦੇ 'ਉਤਮੇ ਮਹਿ ਉਤਮ' ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੈ। ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਰਬ ਗੁਣ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ 'ਦਾਸਨਦਾਸ' ਅਤੇ 'ਨੀਚ' ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਖਰ ਭਾਰੀ ਪਾਸੇ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ- "ਨਿਵੈ ਸੁ ਗਉਰਾ ਹੋਇ।" ਖਾਲੀ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਖੜਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਸਮਾਜਕ, ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੇ ਬਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਕੁ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਦੇਖਣ ਲਈ ਆਉ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਪੰਨੇ ਪਲਟੀਏ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਤੇ ਝਾਤੀ ਮਾਰੀਏ।

ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਬੇਬੇ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਭੈਣ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਨੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭੈਣ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੱਡੇਪਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ, ਵੀਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿਣ- 'ਬੇਬੇ ਤੂੰ ਵੱਡੀ ਹੈਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਵਾਂ ਕਿ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਿਆਂ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਵੇਂ।' ਫਿਰ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਜੀ ਕਹਿਣ- 'ਭਾਈ ਤੂੰ ਸਚ ਆਖਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਆਦਮੀ ਹੋਵੇਂ ਤਾਂ। ਤੂੰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਂਦਾ ਹੈ'।

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਇਸਤਰੀ 'ਬੇਬੇ' ਨਾਨਕੀ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਦਿਬਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਇਆ। ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਭ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਸਭਿਕਾਰ ਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਹੈ- "ਬਹੁ ਜੀ, ਤੂੰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਭੈਣ ਹੈਂ।... ਧੰਨ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਜੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਧੰਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਤੂੰ ਵੀ ਧੰਨ ਹੈਂ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਭੈਣ ਹੈਂ ਅਤੇ ਬੇੜੇ ਬੇੜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਧੰਨ ਹਾਂ ਜੋ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਜੋਗ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।"

ਵੇਈਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਲੋਪ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਬੇਬੇ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਹੀ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿ ਸਕੀ- "ਮੇਰਾ ਵੀਰ ਫੂਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਫੂਥਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਰਨ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ।"

ਜੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਤਾਲੇ ਪਾ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਬੇਬੇ ਨਾਨਕੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਵੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਰਬਾਬ ਭੇਟ ਕਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਮਈ ਬਾਣੀ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ (ਭੈਣ) - ਬੇਬੇ - ਅਖਵਾਈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸੁਪਤਨੀ 'ਨੇਕ ਜਨ' ਮਾਤਾ ਖੀਵੀ ਜੀ ਲੰਗਰ ਦੇ ਇੰਸਟੀਚਿਊਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਚਾਲਕ ਬਣੀ। 'ਮਾਵਾਂ ਠੰਡੀਆਂ ਛਾਵਾਂ' ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਘਿਆਲੀ ਦੀ ਖੀਰ ਦਾ ਲੰਗਰ ਵਰਤਾ, ਮਾਤਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੰਘਣੇ ਪਤਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਰਖਤ ਦੀ ਛਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਲਈ ਬਣ ਗਈ, ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਮ ਦਰਜ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਹੱਕਦਾਰ ਬਣੀ।

"ਬਲਵੰਡ ਖੀਵੀ ਨੇਕ ਜਨ, ਜਿਸ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਲੀ।।

ਲੰਗਰਿ ਦਉਲਤਿ ਵੰਡੀਐ, ਰਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖੀਰ ਘਿਆਲੀ।।"

ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਬੀਬੀ ਅਮਰੋ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਂ ਖੀਵੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਗੁੜਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਨੇਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਘਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਜਾਗ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ

ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਦਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਮਾਤਾ ਭਾਨੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ (ਗੁਰੂ) ਅਰਜਨ 'ਪੁਤਾ' ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੀ 'ਮਾਤਾ ਕੀ ਅਸੀਸ' ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ 'ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਬਿਸਰਉ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਭਜਉ ਜਗਦੀਸ' ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਮਈ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆ, ਤੱਤੀਆਂ ਤਵੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਸੀ ਤਕ ਨਾ ਉਚਾਰੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ, ਮਾਤਾ ਗੁਜਰੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਪਤੀ, ਪੁੱਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਪੋਤਰੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪੂਰਨੇ ਪਾਏ ਕਿ ਅਣਗਿਣਤ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਟੁਕੜੇ-ਟੁਕੜੇ ਕਰਵਾ ਗਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਾਰ ਪੁਆ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਪਰ ਅਣਖ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਆਲ ਨੂੰ ਕੰਮਪਰੇਮਾਇਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮਾਈ ਭਾਰੀ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਬਣ ਚਾਲ੍ਹੀ ਬੇਦਾਵੀਏ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਗੁਰੂ ਲੜ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਲ੍ਹੀ ਮੁਕਤੇ ਬਣਾ, ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਲੰਕਿਤ ਹੋਣੇ ਬਚਾ ਲਿਆ।

ਪਹਿਲੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀਵਾਨ, ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਨੇ ਬੰਦੀ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਅਤੇ ਤੱਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਭੇਦ ਮਿਟਾ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਫ਼ਾੜ ਹੋਣੇ ਬਚਾ ਇੱਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮੋੜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਅਨੇਕਾ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮੇ ਜਾਰੀ ਕਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਰ ਅਣਗਿਣਤ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਔਖੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਡਟੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਹੈ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ, ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ, ਸਮਾਜਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ।

ਹੁਣ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਖੜੀ ਹੈ, ਕੀ ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸੰਭੂਪ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰਨ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਈ ਭਾਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁੰਦਰੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਿਆ ਹੈ?

ਜੁਆਬ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ। ਜਰੂਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਖੁੰਝ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ। ਸਾਇੰਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਸਮਾਜ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝ ਸਕਿਆ।

ਨੇਪੋਲੀਅਨ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ "Give me good mothers and I will give you a good nation" ਅੱਜ ਪੰਥ ਚੌਰਾਹੇ ਤੇ ਖੜਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਇਹ ਕਿਤੇ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਬਣਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸਫਲ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ? ਕੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਵਾਬੀਆਂ ਠੁਕਰਾ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਘੋੜੇ ਦੀ ਲਿੱਦ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਵਾਬੀ ਬਖਸਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਅੱਜ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਖੁੱਧੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਮਾਤ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਨਜਰ ਆ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ? ਕਾਰਣ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਹ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਆਪ ਹੀ 'ਮਨਮੁੱਖ ਮੈਲੀ ਕਾਮਣੀ ਕੁਨਾਰ', ਬਣ ਜਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਸਹਿਜ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਨਾਲ ਸੀਗਾਰੀ ਨਾ ਗਈ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਆਸ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਔਲਾਦ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇਗੀ? ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਕੁ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਅਨਦ ਅਨੰਤ' ਦੀ ਅਸੀਸ ਦੇਵੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ 'ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਬਹੁ ਦੇਇ' ਸਬਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਨਿਸਚੇ ਹੀ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਹੀ ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਸੁਆਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਚੰਗੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਥੇਬੰਦਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਯਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਹਾਂ ?

ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੋ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਖਾਸ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇੱਕ ਮਾਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ। ਜਿਥੋਂ ਮਾਤਾ ਨੇ ਬਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਗੁੜਤੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਸੁਭਾ ਹੁਣ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਯੋਗ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੈ, ਉਥੋਂ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਨੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਆਏ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੈ।

ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲਜ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਦੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰਿੰ. ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾ: ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ, ਬਾਵਾ ਹਰਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸਿਰ ਕੱਢਵੇਂ ਨਾਮ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਜਾਂ ਸਕੂਲ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਭਾ: ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਕੇ ਹਨ? ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਬੜੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਨਵੈਂਟ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਾ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਏ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਿ ਉਥੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਲਚਰ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਕੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਾਸ ਕੋਈ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਏਦਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਇੱਛੁਕ ਮਾਪੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜ ਸਕਣ? ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਚਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਈਸਾਈਅਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਨਵਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲੈ ਆਈ, ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਇੱਕ ਢਾਈ ਸੌ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਈਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹਲੂਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ।

“ਡਾ. ਰਾਧਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ - Education should be imparted with a view to the type of society that we wish to create”

ਕੀ ਜਿਹੇ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਉਸਾਰਣ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਹਵਾਨ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ? ਕੇਵਲ ਉੱਪਰਲੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਮਾਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜੁਆਬ ਨਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਏਗਾ। ‘ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਬੇਚੁਹੁ, ਜਨਮ ਅਥਿਰਥਾ ਜਾਈ’ ਦਾ ਬੋਲਬਾਲਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ‘ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ’ ਦਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਪਿਛੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਸੁਭਵਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਅਤੇ ਯੋਗ ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਨੇਜਮੈਂਟ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਸੀ ਧੜੇਬੰਦੀ ਨੇ ਹਾਲਤ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਹਾਸੇਰੀਣੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਅਦਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਾਕ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਅਦਾਰੇ ਫੌਰੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਕੱਢਵੇਂ ਸੱਜਣ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਖਾਸ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਰੱਖ, ਮਿਆਰੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਯਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਹੋਣ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਯੋਗ ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ ਘਾੜਤ ਘੜੀ ਜਾਏ, ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ

ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਬਣ ਉਚੇ ਤੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਕਿ ਕਾਜ਼ੀ ਨੂਰਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਵਾਰੀ ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਪਏ:

"ਇਹ ਸਗ (ਕੁੱਤੋ) ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਮਰਦ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਾਰਦੇ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਵਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰੀਮਤ ਦਾ ਗਹਿਣਾ ਜਾ ਰੁਪਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੁੱਟਦੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਸੁਆਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਗੋਲੀ ਬਾਂਦੀ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਭਚਾਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਨਾ ਇਹ ਚੋਰੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਚੋਰ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਨ ਮਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।"

~ ~ ~

ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਭਵਿਖ

ਪ੍ਰੋ : ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਸ਼ਿੰਗਟਨ

ਅੱਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਉੱਜਲੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਇੱਕੱਤ੍ਰ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਂ। ਅਸੀਂ ਰਲਕੇ ਉਹ ਰਾਹ ਉਲੀਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਚੱਲਕੇ 'ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਬੋਲ ਬਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ' ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਵਲ ਪੰਥ ਅਗੇ ਵਧ ਸਕੇ। ਇਸ ਟੀਚੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਕਦਮ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਪੈ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਕੁੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਿਟਾਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। 'ਜੇ ਇਕੁ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਉਗਵੈ', ਦਾਲ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਫਾੜ ਹੋਏ ਦਾਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਗਦੇ, ਜੇ ਦਾਣਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਵੇ (ਸਾਬਤ ਰਹੇ) ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਉਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਾਸ ਇਕੋ ਹੀ ਰਾਹ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਹੈ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਣਾ। ਇਹ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ, ਮਹਾਂਪੁਰਖਾਂ, ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੇਣ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਈ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਤੇ ਲਾਮਿਸਾਲ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। ਇਸ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਤੇ ਮਹੱਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਣਾ ਪੰਥ ਨਾਲ ਧੋਖਾ ਹੈ।

ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਭੀ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੇਰੇ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਸਭ ਨੇ ਰਲਕੇ ਇਹ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਅੱਜ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਸਾਡਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਕੇ ਇਕ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਲ ਵਧਣਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਬਣਾਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਲੀਰੇ ਲੀਰੇ ਤੇ ਖੇਰੂੰ ਖੇਰੂੰ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ?

ਵਾਪਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇਖਕੇ ਚਿੰਤਾਜਨਕ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਵਾਲ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ 'ਹੁਣ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਬਣੇਗਾ?' ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਪੰਨਾ ਉੱਚੀ ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਸਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਲੋੜ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸੁਨਣ, ਸਮਝਣ ਤੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਬੋਲ ਹੈ "ਹਰ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਰਖਣਾ।

(1) ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਵੇਲੇ : ਪੰਥ ਦੇਖੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਾਲਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਅਕਬਰ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਸਮੱਲ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੇ, ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕੀਤਾ, ਉਦੋਂ ਭੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਹੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਸੀ, 'ਹੁਣ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਬਣੇਗਾ?' ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਏਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਮੀਟਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਰਜ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਇਹੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਅਠਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਭੀ ਉਠਿਆ ਸੀ। ਏਕੇ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਫੇਰ ਦੇਹਰਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਪੀਰ ਮਲੀਏ, ਰਾਮ ਰਾਈਏ ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਖਾਰਜ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਸੰਦ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੀ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ

ਦਿਤੀ ਤੇ ਪੰਥ ਧਰੋਹੀ ਮਸੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਜਾਵਾਂ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ। ਗੁਰਮਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਪਾੜ ਪਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਚਾਹੇ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਸਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਨਬੰਧੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਖਾਰਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਅਜ ਭੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਏਕੇ ਲਈ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਲੈਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ। ਵੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਠਨ ਤੇ ਔਖੇ ਜਾਪਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਫੈਸਲਿਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

(2) **ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵੇਲੇ** : 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਭੀ ਏਕੇ ਤੇ ਸਖਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਪਹਿਰਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਪੰਥ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਈ ਕੁੜ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੱਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਸੋਪੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੇ ਏਕਾ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਹੁਕਮ ਕੀਤਾ। ਨਾ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀ ਸਦਾ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਦੀਆਂ ਮਿਸਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੁਗਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੇਤਾ। ਇਸੇ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੰਥ ਨੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਫਤਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਰੱਖੀ। ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਪੰਥ ਦੇਖਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹਿ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਏਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਭੋਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਸਦੇ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਿਖ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਏਕੇ ਤੋਂ ਟੁੱਟਣ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਭੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੈ।

(3) **ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਰਾਜ ਵੇਲੇ** : ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਰੇਣ ਲਈ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਢ ਬੁੱਝਾ। ਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਬਣ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਪੰਥ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਣ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਰੁਕਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸੱਚੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਨੇ ਦੋਨਾਂ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਏਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ। ਬੁੱਤੋ-ਪੂਜ ਤੇ ਜਾਤ-ਅਭਿਮਾਨੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਰ ਹੋਈ (ਅੱਜ ਫਿਰ ਇਹੀ ਰੋਗ ਸਿਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਚਿੰਬੜਿਆ ਹੈ) ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥਕ ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਗਏ। ਇਸ ਏਕੇ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਫੜੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। 1905 ਵਿਚ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬੁੱਤੋ ਪੂਜਾ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਵਾਈ। 1909 ਵਿਚ ਅਨੰਦ ਵਿਵਾਹ ਦਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ। ਅੰਤ 1925 ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਐਕਟ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਵਾਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਉਕੜਾਂ ਝੱਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਖੂਨ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤਾ। ਮੁਸੀਬਤਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਣਾ ਤੇ ਬਲੀਦਾਨ ਦੇਣਾ ਹਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਡਿਗ ਪੈਣਾ ਹਾਰ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ “ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰ ਸਿਰਰ ਨ ਦੀਆਂ” ਦੇ ਦਸੀ ਰਾਹ ਤੇ ਚਲਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਨੇ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਫਤਹ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ।

(4) **ਅੱਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਭੀ ਵਧ ਅਉਕੜਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ।** ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ ਝੁੰਘੀਆਂ ਚਾਲਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਏਕੇ ਤੋਂ ਪਾੜਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੇ ਤੇਜ਼ਨ ਲਈ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰਦਾਰ ਯਤਨ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸੂਝਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਚਲਿਆ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉ ਕੇਵਲ ਏਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ-ਉਹ ਹੈ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ।

ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਲੋਕ ਕਥਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਘਣੇ ਜੰਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਕੁਹਾੜਾ ਡਿਗਿਆ। ਸਾਰੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਦਰਖਤ ਘਬਰਾ ਗਏ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕੁਹਾੜਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਢ ਮੁਕਾਏਗਾ। ਸਿਆਣਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ, “ਡਰੋ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹ ਕੁਹਾੜਾ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਿਗਾੜ ਸਕਦਾ ਜਦ ਤਾਈਂ ਕੁਹਾੜੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਉਸਦਾ ਦਸਤਾ ਬਣਕੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ”। ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਕੋਈ ਡਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਦ ਤਾਈਂ

ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਪੰਥ ਦੇਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੁਹਾੜੇ ਦਾ ਦਸਤਾ ਬਣਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਮੁਕਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਅਜੋਕਾ ਸਾਡੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਏਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕੇਵਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਨਮਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਨਾ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣਾ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਫੋਕੀ ਚਾਰ ਦਿਨ ਦੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੇਕਰ ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਕੁਝ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਵਾਲਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਚੁਪ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਥ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਖ ਵਖ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਬਣਾਕੇ ਉਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਲੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹੋ ਚੁਕਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਾਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੁੜਕੇ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੇਖੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਫੁੱਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਏਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਤੋੜਨ ਲਈ ਸੱਦਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰਾਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ।

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ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ : ਸਰੂਪ, ਸਥਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਧਾਨ

ਡਾ. ਜਾਗੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਜਾਂ ਵਧੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੋਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕਾਫੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਸਾਧਨ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਰਚਨਾਮੂਲਕ ਤੱਤ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ।

ਸੰਗੀਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਇਸ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਇਕੋ ਨਾਟਕ ਦੀ ਸਕ੍ਰਿਪਟ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਨਾਟਕ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਟੇਜ ਉੱਤੇ ਖੇਡੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ ਉਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਗਾਇਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਨਾਟਕ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਕ੍ਰਿਪਟ, ਕਲਾਕਾਰ, ਸਟੇਜ ਆਦਿ ਕਈ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਰੋਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਬਾਣੀ, ਰਾਗ, ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ਆਦਿ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਰੋਲ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ (ਬਾਣੀ+ਰਾਗ) ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਚੇਰਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:-

ਪਾਠੁ ਪੜਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ ਨਿਵਲਿ ਭੁਅੰਗਮੁ ਸਾਧੇ।
ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਅਧਿਕ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ॥੧॥
ਪਿਆਰੇ ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਮੈ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਮ ਅਨੇਕਾ।
ਹਾਰ ਪਰਿਓ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੁਧਿ ਬਿਬੇਕਾ। ਰਹਾਉ।
ਮੇਨਿ ਭਇਓ ਕਰ ਘਾਤੀ ਰਹਿਓ ਨਗਨ ਡਿਰਿਓ ਬਨ ਮਾਹੀ।
ਤਟ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਭ ਧਰਤੀ ਭ੍ਰਮਿਓ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਛੁਟਕੈ ਨਾਹੀ॥੨॥
ਮਨ ਕਾਮਨਾ ਤੀਰਥ ਜਾਇ ਬਸਿਓ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤ ਧਰਾਏ।
ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮੇਲ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜੇ ਲਖ-ਜਤਨ ਕਰਾਏ॥੩॥
ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਨੀ ਹੇਵਰ ਗੋਵਰ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ।
ਐਨ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਭੂਮਿ ਬਹੁ ਅਰਪੇ ਨਹ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਦੁਆਰਾ॥੪॥
ਪੂਜਾ ਅਰਚਾ ਬੰਦਨ ਡੰਡਉਤ ਖਟੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਰਤੁ ਰਹਤਾ।
ਹਉ ਹਉ ਕਰਤ ਬੰਧਨ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿਆ ਨਹ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਾ॥੫॥

ਜੇਗ ਸਿਧ ਆਸਣ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਏ ਭੀ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ।
 ਵਡੀ ਆਰਜਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜਨਮੇ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਰਹਿਆ ॥੬॥
 ਰਾਜ ਲੀਲਾ ਰਾਜਨ ਕੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਰਿਆ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਫਾਰਾ ।
 ਸੋਜ ਸੇਹਨੀ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਚੇਆ ਨਰਕ ਘੋਰ ਕਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ॥੭॥
 ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਹੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਮਨ ਕੈ ਕਰਮਾ ।
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਪੁਰਖ ਲਿਖੇ ਕਾ ਲਹਨਾ ॥੮॥
 ਤੇਰੇ ਸੇਵਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਰੰਗਿ ਮਾਤਾ ।
 ਭਇਓ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲੁ ਦੀਨ ਦੁਖ ਭੰਜਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਤਾ ।
 ਰਹਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ । (ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ 642)

ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਦੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵੀ ਵਾਰਣ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਥਾਨ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਜਾਉ ਤ ਹਉ ਹਉ ਕਰਤੇ ।
 ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੂਛਉ ਤ ਮਾਇਆ ਰਾਤੇ ॥੧॥
 ਸੇ ਅਸਥਾਨੁ ਬਤਾਵਹੁ ਮੀਤਾ ।
 ਜਾ ਕੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਨੀਤਾ ॥੨॥ ਰਹਾਉ ।
 ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬੇਦ ਪਾਪ ਪੁੰਨ ਵੀਚਾਰ ।
 ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਅਉਤਾਰ ॥੩॥
 ਗਿਰਸਤ ਮਹਿ ਚਿੰਤ ਉਦਾਸ ਅਹੰਕਾਰ ।
 ਕਰਮ ਕਰਤ ਜੀਅ ਕਉ ਜੰਜਾਰ ॥੪॥
 ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਮਨੁ ਵਸਿ ਆਇਆ ।
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਤਰੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਮਾਇਆ ॥੫॥
 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਈਐ ।
 ਇਹੁ ਅਸਥਾਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੬॥ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ।
 (ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ 3੮੫)

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੋ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਦੱਸੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਲਮ ਨਾਲ ਇੰਝ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ:-

“ਤੁਸਾਂ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੁ ਕਰਮ ਸੁਗਮ ਹੈ ਕਥਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ, ਤੇ ਫਲੁ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈ, ਏਹੁ ਅਸਾਡੇ ਸਮਝ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੈਸੇ ਆਵੇ? ਤਾਂ ਬਚਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਜੋ ਲਕੜੀਹਾਰੇ ਲਕੜੀਆਂ ਲਿਆਵਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ ਤੇ ਪਾਂਡੀ ਪੰਡਾਂ ਲਿਆਵਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ, ਸੇ ਮਜ਼ਹਰੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ ਤੇ ਨਛਾ ਬੋਤਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਲੂਣ ਅੰਨ ਦੀ ਹੱਟੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ, ਮਜ਼ਹਰੀ ਓਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੋਤੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਛਾ ਵਧੀਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਰਾਫ ਤੇ ਬਜਾਜ ਓਨਾਂ ਥੀ ਭੀ ਮਜ਼ਹਰੀ ਘੱਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ, ਝੂਖਣਾਂ ਤੇ ਰੁਪਯਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੇਦਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ ਤੇ ਨਛਾ ਬਹੁਤ

ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਜਵਾਹਰੀ ਮੋਤੀ ਹੀਰੇ ਦਾ ਸੰਦਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ ਤੇ ਸੁਖ ਨਾਲਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਨਫਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਉਹਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਭੀ ਮੋਤੀ ਹੀਰੇ ਦੀ ਪਰਖ ਸਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਤੇਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਜੇ ਤਪੁ ਹੋਨਿ, ਸੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਉਪਰ ਕਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਕਥਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਸੁਣਨ ਕਰ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੇ ਤਾ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਪਿਛੋਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਂਤਕੀ ਤਪ ਹੈ ਨਫਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੈ।"¹

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਇੱਕ ਸਾਖੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੋ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

"ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਏਹੁ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਖੂਹ ਦੀ ਪੈਲੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਝਬਦੇ ਪਕਾਈਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਾਜ ਦਾ ਬੋਹਲ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਆਵੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇਸੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਫਲ ਹੋਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਖੂਹ ਦਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੀ ਪੈਲੀ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਦੂਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੈਲੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਹੁੰਚਦਾ ਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਐਸਾ ਹੈ ਜੇਸੇ ਮੇਘ ਗਰਜ ਕੇ ਬਰਖਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਭੇ ਪੈਲੀਆਂ ਹਰੀਆਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਨਿ।"²

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਗ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਲ ਸਹਿਤ ਗਾਇਨ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਰਤਨ³ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਸਹਿਤ ਹੀ ਰਚੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸੰਗੀਤ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਮੂਲਕ ਤੱਤ ਹੈ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ "ਮਰਦਾਨਿਆ ਰਬਾਬ ਛੋੜ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ। ਤਬ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਰਾਗ ਕੀਤਾ"। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਵੇਲੇ ਕਾਇਮ ਸੀ।

ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੂੰਗੇ ਦੀ ਮਠਿਆਈ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਡਾ. ਪੀਤਾਬਰ ਦੱਤੋ ਬੜਥਵਾਲ⁴ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਨਾਕਾਫੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਰੱਬੀ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ 'ਸੱਚ' ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਜੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਿੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਛੁਪਾ ਕੇ ਨਾ ਰੱਖ ਸਕਣ ਕਾਰਣ 'ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਕ' ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਆਹਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੁੱਟ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਈ ਥਾਈਂ 'ਸ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਮਹਾਂ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੋਲਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ:

ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ

ਮੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੭੬੩)

ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਨਿੱਦਰ ਅਧੀਨ ਉਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ 'ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ' ਜਾਂ 'ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ' ਵੱਲ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਆਮ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਿਖੇੜ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਜੋਸੀ ਮੈਂ ਆਵੇ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ
ਤੇਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ।।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੭੨੨)

ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ
ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ।।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨੮)

ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ 'ਅੱਖਰ' ਲਫਜ਼ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅੱਖਰ ਲੰਕਿਕ ਜਗਤ ਦੇ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਉਨੀਵੀਂ ਪਉੜੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾਮ, ਸਿਫਤ, ਗਿਆਨ, ਗੀਤ, ਗੁਣ, ਲਿਖਣਾ, ਬੋਲਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਅੱਖਰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਲੇਖਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ:

ਅਖਰੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਖਰੀ ਸਾਲਾਹ।
ਅਖਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗੀਤ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਹ।

ਅਖਰੀ ਲਿਖਣੁ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬਾਣਿ।
ਅਖਰਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਵਖਾਣਿ।

ਜਿਨਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਲਿਖੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਨਾਹਿ। (ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੪)

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੋਵੇ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਨੇੜੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ 'ਨਾਦ' ਹੈ। ਸੰਗੀਤ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਦ ਸੰਗੀਤਮਈ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਦ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਗੋਚਰ ਜਗਤ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਹ ਲਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕੋਸ਼ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, "ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਦ ਅਦੁਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਨਾਦ ਦੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਮ ਲਾਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਮਣੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਇਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਨਾਦ ਦੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।"

ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਸਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਦ ਬਿਨਾ ਗੀਤ ਹੋ ਨਾ ਨਾਦ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਰਿਤ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਜਗਤ ਹੀ ਨਾਦਾਤਮਕ ਹੈ।

ਨ ਨਾਦੇਨ ਵਿਨ ਗੀਤੰ ਨ ਨਾਦੇਨ ਵਿਨ ਸਵਰ।

ਨ ਨਾਦੇਨ ਵਿਨ ਨਰਿਤੰ ਤਸਮਾਨਾਦਤਮਨੰ ਜਗਤ।⁶

ਨਾਦ ਉਪਰ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਕੁਝ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਤੱਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ

ਹਨ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ। ਜਾਰਜ ਬਾਮਸ⁷ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਮਝਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਕੁਝ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸਾਡੀ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਦੀ ਪਕੜ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆ ਸਕਦਾ। ਸ਼ਾਪਨਆਵਰ⁸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਸੰਗੀਤਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ⁹ ਵੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਗਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਤੁਹਨੇ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ
ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੇ।

.....

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੇਡਾ
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਧਾਰੇ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਦ ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਮ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਸ਼ਬਦ' ਲਫਜ਼ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਦਿ-ਅੰਤ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ।

ਸਬਦੇ ਹੀ ਭਿਰਿ ਚਿਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੭)

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਾਦ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਤਿ ਸੂਖਮ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਨਾਦ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਢੁਕਵੇਂ, ਸੰਖਿਪਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਡਾ: ਸੀਮੇਨ¹⁰ ਸੰਗੀਤਕ ਸੁਰ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਸਦਾ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਭਿਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਇੱਕੋ ਲੰਮੇ ਲੇਖ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਸੁਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੇਚਰ, ਅਜੁਨੀ, ਅਕਾਲ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰਦਿਆਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਸ ਤੱਕੋਂ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਅਸੰਭਵ ਦੱਸੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਢਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਯੋਗ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ 'ਢਾਈ' ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ:

ਹਉ ਢਾਈ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੇ ਲਾਇਆ।

(ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ, ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੫੦)

ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅਕਥ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਢਾਈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਕਥ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਢਾਈ ਕਥੇ ਅਕਥੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਸਵਾਰਿਆ।

(ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ, ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੯)

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਵਿੱਚ 'ਦਾਦੀ' ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਗਾਇਕ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜੱਸ ਗਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਮਿਲਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਪਕੜ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਉਣ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਉਥੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੱਖਾ ਤਰਲ ਅਤੇ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਵੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਗੀਤ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਅਧਾਰ ਨਾਦ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਕਿਰਤ ਰਾਗ ਹੈ, ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਨ ਸੁਵੰਨੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵੰਨ ਸੁਵੰਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਵੰਨ ਸੁਵੰਨਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਥੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਵਨ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਕਈ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਧਰੇ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਅਗੰਮਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਿਧਰੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ-ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿਕਾ, ਪਤੀ-ਪਤਨੀ, ਭਗਤ-ਇਸ਼ਟ, ਪਿਤਾ-ਪੁੱਤਰ ਆਦਿ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਨੇਕ ਢੰਗਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਹਰਟੀ ਹੋਵਾਂ ਬਨਿ ਬਸਾ ਕੰਦ ਮੂਲ ਚੁਣਿ ਖਾਉ।
ਗੁਰਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਾਰਿ ਵਾਰਿ ਹਉ ਜਾਉ ਜੀਉ।
ਮੈ ਬਨਜਾਰਨਿ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ। ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਰੁ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ਜੀ। ਰਹਾਉ।
ਕੋਕਿਲ ਹੋਵਾ ਅੰਬਿ ਬਸਾ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ।
ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਦਰਸਨ ਰੂਪਿ ਅਪਾਰੁ।
ਮਛਲੀ ਹੋਵਾ ਜਲਿ ਬਸਾ ਜੀਅ ਜੇਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਰਿ।
ਉਰਵਾਰਿ ਪਾਰਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਹੁ ਵਸੈ ਹਉ ਮਿਲਉਗੀ ਬਾਹ ਪਸਾਰਿ।
ਨਾਗਨਿ ਹੋਵਾਂ ਧਰ ਵਸਾ ਸਬਦ ਵਸੈ ਭਉ ਜਾਇ।
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦਾ ਸੇਹਾਗਣੀ ਜਿਨ ਜੇਤੀ ਜੇਤਿ ਸਮਾਇ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੫੭)

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ ਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਵਿ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਦੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੀ ਰਾਗ ਵੀ ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸੁਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਵੀ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਭਾਵ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਵੀ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਅਤੇ ਤਿੱਖਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਵਾਧੂ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੰਕੀਰਨ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਅਰਥ ਨਾ ਰੱਖਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਪਰ ਅਭਿਨਵ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਭਾਵ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਾਦ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਥਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਾਰਥਕ

ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।¹¹

ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜਦੋਂ ਨਾਦ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਝੁੰਘਾਈ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰਿਚਰਡਜ਼¹² ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਤਰੀਵ, ਨਿਸ਼ੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਾਹਿਤਿਕ ਰੰਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕੋਝਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ, ਨਾ ਚੁਭਵਾ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ..... ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਭਾਵ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਚਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਠਾਕੁਰ ਜੈ ਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ,¹³ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਜੇ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸੁਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਅਕਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਉਤਰਾਉ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਉ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਚਿੰਤਾਮਣੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬੜੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, "ਵਿਭਿੰਨ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਦੇ ਉਤਰਾਉ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਉ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਚੇਸ਼ਟਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੁਕਤ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਤੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਵਿਵਧਤਾ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਾਹਲੀ ਜਾਂ ਡਰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਤੀ ਤੇਜ਼ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਵਿਚਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਤਰਕ ਆਦਿ ਅਵਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਤੀ ਵਿਲੰਬਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਬੋਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਤੀ 'ਮੱਧ' (ਨਾ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਤੇਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਹੌਲੀ) ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ।"¹⁴

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਤੋਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਬੋਲਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਉਤਰਾਉ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਉ ਉਸ ਭਾਵ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਵਿ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਵਾਚਣ ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਹੀ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਕੁਝ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਦਾ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਬੰਧ ਬੜੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੰਭੀਰ, ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਕਰੁਣ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਿਰੀ, ਗਉੜੀ, ਰਾਮਕਲੀ, ਭੈਰਵ ਆਦਿ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ, ਸੂਹੀ, ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ, ਬਸੰਤ, ਮਲਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਰਾਗ ਵਰਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਭਗਤੀ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਗੁਜਰੀ, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ, ਸੋਰਠ ਆਦਿ ਰਾਗ ਅਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਾਝ, ਆਸਾ, ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਆਦਿ ਰਾਗ ਪ੍ਰਯੁਕਤ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਕੇਵਲ ਬਾਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੱਕ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਤੱਕ ਵੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਠੀਕ ਭਾਵ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵੀ ਉਸੇ ਰਾਗ, ਧੁਨੀ ਆਦਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਵੱਧ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਕਾਵਿ-ਕਲਾ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਾਵਿ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਾਮਗਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਗਤ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸੇ

ਸਰੋਤੇ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਅਸਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਉਸ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣੂ ਹੋਵੇ ਪਰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।¹⁵ ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਪਸ਼ੂ-ਪੰਛੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕੀਲਣ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਗੀਤ ਰਤਨਾਕਰ¹⁶ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, "ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੱਲ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਸਵਾਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਰਾ ਪੰਧੂੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਆ ਰੋਂਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਬਾਲਕ ਵੀ ਗੀਤ ਦਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪੀ ਕੇ ਬੜੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰਾਨੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੰਗਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਘੁੰਮਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਿਰਗ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਹੁੰਦਿਆ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਲੇ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਾਨ ਗੁਆ ਬਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।"

ਸੰਗੀਤ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਰਲਾ ਕੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਗਾਇਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦੀ। ਸਗੋਂ ਤਾਵ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਫੱਸ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਾ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫ਼ੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਅਜੇਕੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲਗਭਗ ਹਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਉੱਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਗਾਇਨ ਵਿਧੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਗਾਇਕ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ:-

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਕੀ ਤਥਾ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

ਮਲਕ ਮੁਰੀਦ ਤਥਾ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਚੜਾ ਸੋਹੀਆ ਕੀ ਧੁਨੀ ਗਾਵਣੀ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੭)

ਗਉੜੀ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ਰਾਇ ਕਮਾਲਦੀ ਮੋਜਦੀ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਕੀ

ਧੁਨਿ ਉਪਰਿ ਗਾਵਣੀ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੩੧੮)

ਗੁਜਰੀ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ਸਿਕੰਦਰ ਬਿਰਾਹਿਮ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਕੀ ਧੁਨੀ ਗਾਉਣੀ,

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੫੦੮)

ਵਡਹੰਸ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ਲਲਾ ਬਹਲੀਮਾ ਕੀ ਧੁਨਿ ਗਾਵਣੀ

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੫੮੫)

ਅਜਿਹੇ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਵੀ ਗਾਇਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲਗਭਗ ਹਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। 'ਰਹਾਉ' ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ-ਸਥਾਈ, ਟੇਕ, ਉਹ ਪਦ ਜੋ ਗਾਉਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਹਰ ਅੰਤਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ।¹⁷ ਇਸ ਪਦ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਅੰਤਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ "ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਪਧਤੀ ਦੀ ਗਾਇਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਅਧਾਰਸ਼ਿਲਾ 'ਰਹਾਉ' ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੈ।¹⁸ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਭਾਵ ਮੰਡਲ ਹੀ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਸ਼ਬਦ¹⁹ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ:-

“ਲੱਖ ਖੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀਆਂ
ਜੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇਇ।”

ਇਸ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਐਲ. ਪੀ. ਅਤੇ ਕੋਸਟਾ ਵੀ ਮਿਲਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੈ:-

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਏਕਸ ਸਿਉ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ।
ਏਕਸ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਭ ਧੰਧੁ ਹੈ, ਸਭ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਮੇਹੁ ਮਾਇ।

ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਾ ਕੇ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਮੌਕੇ ਤੇ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੀ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਬੇਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੌਕੇ ਤੇ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਚਰਚਾ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਦੀ ਗੁੰਜਾਇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਰਾਗ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਧੁਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਉਂਦੇ ਆ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਜ ਗਾਇਨ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਪਾਠ ਜਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਗਾਇਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵੇਲੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਅਲਾਪਮਈ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਗਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ- ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ, ਵਾਰ ਸਲੋਕਾ ਨਾਲਿ, ਸਲੋਕ ਭੀ ਮਹਲੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕੇ ਲਿਖੇ, ਟੁੰਡੇ ਅਸਰਾਜੇ ਕੀ ਧੁਨੀ।... ਪਰ ਇਸ ਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਟੁੰਡੇ ਅਸਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਧੁਨੀ ਤੇ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਕਈਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸੁਰ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੂਨੀ ਹਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਾਠ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਲਈ ਰਚੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ:-

ਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੇ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ।
ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੨੦)

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਭਾਈ। ਓਹ ਸਫਲ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ।

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨੯)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਪਾਠ ਅਤੇ ਗਾਇਨ ਦਾ ਬੜਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਬੜਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

ਭਲੇ ਭਲੇ ਰੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ॥

ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮਾ ਰਾਮਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥

ਛੋਡਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੇ ਧੰਧ ਸੁਆਉ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਅਪਨੇ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

ਕੋਟਿ ਮਧਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵੈ ॥

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੀ ਜਾਵਉ ਟੇਕ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਏਕ ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੮੮੫)

ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਲਹਿਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਹੀ ਮਕਬੂਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨ ਹੋਵੇ। ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇੰਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਵੀਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਨ ਹੋਣ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਸ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਸੀ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਕਬੂਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਭਾਈ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਗੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧੀ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਂਗ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਪੁਣ ਸਨ।

ਕਲਾਸੀਕਲ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕੇਵਲ ਰਾਗ, ਅਲਾਪ, ਤਾਨਾਂ, ਗਮਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਲਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ-ਮਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਉਲਝ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਗ ਵਲੋਂ ਬੇਮੁੱਖ ਕਰ ਬੈਠੇ। ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਭਾਈ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਭਾ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, "ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਦੱਸੀ ਹੋਈ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਢੋਂ ਹੀ ਭੁੱਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਰਬਾਬ, ਸਰੋਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਕ ਰਾਗੀ ਭੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾ ਵਧਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਰਾਗੀ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਣਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਗਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਛੰਦ, ਹੜਤਾਲ ਤੇ ਪੇੜੀ ਆਦਿਕ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਾਈਏ ਹਨ। ਔਰ ਰਬਾਬ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਵੀਣਾ ਦਾ ਬਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੋਦੇ ਦਾ ਅਲਾਪ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰਟਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਿਖੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਛਪੇ ਆਦਿ ਛੰਦ (ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਖਾਵਜ ਦੇ ਬੋਲ ਹਨ) ਪੜ੍ਹ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੇ। ਛਟਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੜਕਟ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਰਸ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਛਟਕਾਰਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੋਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਰ ਜੋੜੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਉਡਾਇਆ ਆਟਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਾੜੀਆਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਰੁਮਾਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੜਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਦੇ ਬਰਤਨਾਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਡਿੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ।"²⁰

ਹੁਣ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਰਸਮ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਮਾੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ

ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਜਿਹੇ ਜਿਹਾ ਵੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਲੋਕ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਮਝਦਿਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗੀਆ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਲੰਗਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੱਚਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਪਕਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਖਾਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਲੰਗਰ ਇੰਨਾ ਵਧੀਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਫ਼ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਇੰਜ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ:

ਲੰਗਰੁ ਚਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੀ ਖਟੀਐ ॥

ਲੰਗਰਿ ਦਉਲਤਿ ਵੰਡੀਐ ਰਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਖੀਰਿ ਘਿਆਲੀ ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੬੭)

ਜੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਗੀ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਨਿਪੁਣ ਸਨ। ਭਾਈ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਜਗਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਗਾਇਕ ਤਾਨ ਸੈਨ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਹਰਿਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੀ।²¹ ਭਾਈ ਸੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ਤਰੁਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੁੱਲ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਹ ਦਰਜਾ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਲੀਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੱਤੋ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਹੜ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਯੋਗ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ।

ਵੈਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੱਤੋ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕਈ ਸ਼ੰਕੇ ਖੜੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਘਟਨਾ ਇੰਜ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਰੂਪ ਲਈ ਕਟੜ ਲੋਕ ਰਬਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦਾ ਮਿਆਰ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਘੱਟ ਗਿਆ। ਕੰਵਰ ਮਿਰਗੋਂਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ:-

“ਰਾਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਰਬਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਬਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਰਪਾਟੀ ਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਬਣਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੁਚੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੇ, ਸੋ ਇਸ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਦਿਨ ਪਰ ਦਿਨ ਲੋਪ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਸੁਤੇ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਜੀਵਕਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਸੀ ਏਸੇ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਰਹੱਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਪਤ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੰਕੋਚ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।”²²

ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਪੂਰੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਪਰ ਭਾਈ ਅਰਦਮਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਗੜੀਆਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ:

“ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੁਝ ਤਅਸਬੀ ਖਿਆਲਾ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਸਜੱਟਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ-ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਭੰਡਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਜੋ ਜਾਤੀ ਤਜ਼ਰਬਾ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਆਖ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਦੀ ਕਲਾਕਾਰੀ ਅਰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ

ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਪੁੰਨ ਅਰ ਉੱਚ ਕੋਟੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਹਿਰ ਸਨ ਹੀ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ, ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਅਰ ਸਿਦਕ-ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਅਜੋਕਲ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਟਕੇ ਬਣੇ ਹਨ। ਕੀਰਤਨ ਫਰੇਸ਼ ਅਰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਰੇ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਉੱਚੇ, ਸੁਘੜ ਤੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਘਟੀਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ।²³

ਹੁਣ ਤੇ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਹੋਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਨਮੋਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਚਿੜ੍ਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਤਮਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਰਪੱਕਤਾ ਆਈ ਉਥੇ ਸੰਕੀਰਨਤਾ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਭਾਈ ਘਨੂਈਆ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸਾਖੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਦਸੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਥੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ-ਦਿਲੀ ਅਤੇ 'ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ' ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਹੈ ਉਥੇ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਸੰਕੀਰਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੋਲ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਭਾਈ ਘਨੂਈਆ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਸਾਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਕਤੀ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਕਬੂਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਸਲੀ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਜੈਲਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਆਦਿ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਯੁੱਧ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਚਾਅ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਲਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਚਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਤ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਣ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ²⁴ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਹ ਹੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ-

(ੳ) ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

(ਅ) ਕੀਰਤਨ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਚਾਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

(ੲ) ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਸਰੂਪ ਰਚਨਾ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਥਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

(ਸ) ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੋਟੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਰਾਗ ਨਾਲ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਨਘੜ੍ਹਤ ਵਾਧੂ ਝੁੱਕਾਂ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਲਾਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਗਾਉਣਾ ਅਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ

ਲਿਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੀ ਤੁਕ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਪਹਿਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਚੀਫ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਇਨਾਮ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਉਤਸਵ ਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਗੈਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਗੀ ਵੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਅਜੋਕੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦਰਬਾਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਗੀ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਸਥਾਈ ਅੰਤਰੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਸਗੋਂ ਵਕਤੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੁਚੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰਾਗ ਲਈ ਲਗਾਓ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵੱਲ ਕਦਮ ਪੁੱਟਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਰਾਗੀ ਭਾਈ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, “ਜਦੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਚਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕ ਗੀਤ, ਟੱਪੇ, ਫਿਲਮੀ ਤਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚੰਚਲ ਮਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਕਬੂਲਿਆ; ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਭੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਢੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ ਤੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੌਖੇ ਬੋਝੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਕੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਉਪਜੀਵਕਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ।”²⁵

ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਸ਼ੰਕਰ ਲਾਲ ਮਿਸ਼ਰ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨੂੰ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਦਸਾਇਆ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, “ਪਰੰਤੂ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ (ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ) ਦੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅੱਜਕਲ੍ਹ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਤਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਗਾਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧੁਨਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਗਾਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੋਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਗੰਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਧੁਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਰਸ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੋਲ ਯਾਦ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਜਾਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਦੁੱਖ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।”²⁶

ਹੁਣ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਮਰਸ਼ੀਅਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਆਵੇ ਉਸੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਭੇਟ ਦੇਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਵੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੰਦੇ-ਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਕਲਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਦਾਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਰੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰੀ ਲਈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਰੋਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਟਕਸਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਉਹ ਮਾਇਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸਲੀ ਕਲਾਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਬੜੀ ਨਮੋਸ਼ੀ ਝੱਲਣੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਠੀਕ ਢੰਗ

ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੁਯੋਗ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਨਾਉਣ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਦਾ ਠੀਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਤਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਟਕਸਾਲੀ ਢੰਗ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਧੁਨੀ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ। ਰੇਡੀਓ ਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਵਧ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਅੰਗ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਲੇਖ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਖਤਰਾ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ 'ਘਰ' ਸੰਕੇਤ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਗ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਗਾਇਕੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਸਥਾਨ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਂ ਆਉਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਰ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਂਝੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ।

ਅੱਜ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਰਿਕਾਰਡਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਟੇਪਾਂ ਦਾ ਯੁੱਗ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਜੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਜਾ ਕੈਸਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਭੈਰਵੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋਕ ਭੈਰਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣ।

ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗ ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਿਖੜੇ ਤਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸਧਾਰਨ ਤਾਲਾਂ ਦਾਦਰਾ, ਕਹਿਰਵਾ, ਰੂਪਕ ਆਦਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਰਾਗੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਚੀਤ ਜਾਂ ਧੁਨ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਤੇੜੇ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਵੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਟਕਸਾਲੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਕੋਲ ਸ੍ਰ. ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਲਾਭ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਯੋਗ ਤਨਖਾਹਾਂ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਾਉ ਤੀ ਤੁਕ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਈ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਦੇਣ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਗਾਇਨ ਸ਼ੈਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਰੁਚੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

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ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ

(Modern Problems of the Sikhs)

ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨਾ, ਕਲਮੀਰ

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ (Modern Problems of the Sikhs) ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਵਧੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਵਧੀ ਹੈ। ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਰੂੜ ਤੇ ਪੁਜਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਚਿਰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਸੱਤਾ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਦਲ ਦੇ ਸੱਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਡਾਕਟਰ, ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ, ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ, ਅਰਥ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀ, ਯੋਜਨਾਕਾਰ, ਰਾਜਨੇਤਾ, ਵਿਚਾਰਕ ਗਲੇਬ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਕੋਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਚੀਆਂ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸੁਭਾਇਮਾਨ ਹਨ।

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਦਰਦ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਜਨਮ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਮੰਚ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਦਾ ਰੁੱਤਬਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਸਕੀ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ 'ਕੌਮੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ' ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਵਲ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਵਧ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਮੁਸੀਮ ਇਰਾਦੇ ਨਾਲ? ਕੀ ਪੰਜ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦਾ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਖੜਾ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਮਹਿਲ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਧੋਗਤੀ ਵਲ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ? ਸਿੱਖ ਅੱਜ ਜਿਸ ਚੌਰਾਹੇ ਤੇ ਆ ਖੜੇ ਹਨ, ਕੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਵਿਚ ਰਤਾ ਬੇਸਮਝੀ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀਆਂ ਪਿਛਾਂਹ ਲਿਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ? ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਵਾਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਢੂੰਡਣ ਲਈ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਵਿਰਸੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਪਰਦੂਸ਼ਣ ਭਰੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਲਝਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਸੋਚ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਹਨ।

1. ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ (Definition of a Sikh) :- ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਅਹਿਮ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਤੇ ਸੁਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕੇ। ਹਰ ਆਦਮੀ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਆਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਨੇ ਵਖਰੇਵੇਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਆਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਪਸ਼ਟਤਾ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਭੰਬਲਭੂਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਪੇਟ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਆਮ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹਨ, ਮਨੋਹਰ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ, ਨਿਤਨੇਮੀ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ,

ਆਰਥਿਕ, ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਂਦੇ। ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਪੂਜਾ ਪਾਠ ਜਾਂ ਭਗਤੀ-ਮਾਰਗ ਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਵਿਧੀ ਹੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਲੋਕ ਇਸ ਵਿਨਾਸ਼ਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕੇਵਲ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਅਨਜਾਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਜੀ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪੱਖ ਨਕਾਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕ ਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ-ਲੋਭਾ ਤਾਂ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਾਜੀ-ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵਲੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਮੋੜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੁਝ ਲੋਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵੀ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਕਹਾਉਂਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ, ਸਮਾਜੀ, ਆਰਥਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਐਸੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਅਪਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਉਲਟ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਨੁਕਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਦੇਨਜ਼ਰ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਉਠਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 'ਸਿੱਖ' ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ, ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਤੇ ਸੁਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ, ਸਮਾਜਕ, ਆਰਥਕ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸਭ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਐਕਟ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ 'ਸਿੱਖ' ਦੀ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾਈ ਪੂਰਵ-ਅਕਾਂਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਜੇਕੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਿੱਖ' ਅਤੇ 'ਸਿੱਖੀ' ਦੀ ਇਕ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨਾ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਤੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਜਵਾਬਦਾਰੀ ਹੈ।

2. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਦਰਜਾ (National Status of the Sikhs) :- ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਰਣਨ, ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ, ਟਿਪਣੀਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਾਸ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ, ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਇਕ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਸਮੁਦਾਇ ਜਾਂ ਮੱਤ-ਮੱਤਾਂਤ੍ਰ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰਕੇ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਿਤਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ।

ਅਜੇਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ (National Status of the Sikhs)। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ:

(ਉ) ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕੋਡ ਬਿੱਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇੰਝ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੱਤ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅੰਗ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਾਂ (Sikh representatives) ਨੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਤੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਕਾਂਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਪੂਰੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦਾ, ਪਰ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਚਾਲ੍ਹੀ (40) ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ-ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਫਾਰ ਵਾਰ, ਆਮ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਮੋਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਦੇ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ।

(ਅ) ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਰਗ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਨੀਚ-ਸੁਆਰਥਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਅਲਪਬੁੱਧੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦੇਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਰ-ਬਾਰ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

(ੲ) "ਹਿੰਦੁਵਾਦ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਆਕਾਰ ਭੂ-ਜਲ-ਚਰ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਹਰ ਛੋਟੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਨਿਗਲ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।" ਇਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਨੀਰਦ. ਸੀ. ਚੌਧਰੀ ਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਾਮਰਾਜਵਾਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਕੌਮਾਂ-ਕੌਮੀਅਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਘੱਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਮਤ-ਸਮੁਦਾਇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਮੰਨਣ ਲਈ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ।

(ਸ) ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਈ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਘੱਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਰਾਜ-ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਸਦੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ-ਰਾਜ (Nation State) ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੱਟੜ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਕੌਮ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਇਕ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਕੌਮ ਹਨ। ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਰਾਜ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਓਸਲੇਨ, ਮੈਕਲੀਨ, ਸੇਡਰਮੈਨ, ਰੈਨੀ, ਜਜ਼ਬ ਲਾਪਾਲੇਬਰਾ, ਡੈਕਿਨ ਰਸਤੋਵ ਆਦਿ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਕੌਮ (Nation) ਦੀਆਂ ਜੋ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਿਆਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

Carlton J. H. Hayes ਨੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ, "A Nation is a group of persons who speak a common language, who cherish common historical traditions and constitute a distinct cultural society in which, among other factors, religion and politics, may have played an important, though not continuous roles".

ਬੀ. ਕੇ. ਗੇਕਲਏ ਵੀ ਨੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੋਦਿਆਂ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ : "A Nation stands for a group of people, who are bound together by its common race, common language and literature, common land, common history, common religion, common joys, common sorrows, common political aims and aspirations".

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਿਰਸਾ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੈ। ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੁਹਰਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ : ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ-ਝੰਡੇ, ਬੁੰਗੇ ਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ, ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰ ਆਦਿ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ- ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ, ਲੰਗਰ, ਬੁੰਗੇ, ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾਵਾਂ, ਸ਼ਰੇਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਆਨੰਦ-ਵਿਵਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ, ਸੰਗਤ-ਪੰਗਤ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੁਹਾਵਰਾ ਹੈ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ, ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ, ਦੇਗ-ਤੇਗ ਫਤਹ, ਪੰਥ ਕੀ ਜੀਤ, ਗੁਰਮੁਖ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ, ਗੁਰ ਸੁਰਣਾਈ ਆਦਿ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਹੈ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਚਿੰਦਰੀ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਲਈ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਰਬਉੱਚ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਹੈ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਹੁਰੀਤ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬੋਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਕੀਦੇ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ

ਭੂਗੋਲਿਕ ਸਮੀਪਤਾ।

ਪਿਛਲੀਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਭਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਕੌਮੀ (multinational) ਮੁਲਕ ਭਾਕਤਵਰ ਹਨ, ਬਨਿਸਪਤ ਇਕ ਕੌਮੀ-ਰਾਜ (Mononational States) ਦੇ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਧੀਆ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਸਵਿਟਜ਼ਰਲੈਂਡ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਫਰਾਂਸੀਸੀ, ਜਰਮਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਟੇਲੀਅਨ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਵਿਸ ਨੇਸ਼ਨੈਲਟੀ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਵਿਸ-ਸਟੇਟ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ ਉਥੇ ਹਰ ਸਵਿਜ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਜਰਮਨੀ, ਫਰਾਂਸੀਸੀ, ਇਟੇਲੀਅਨ ਕੌਮੀਅਤ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਬਹੁ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਾਰਡਗਰੇਵ, ਲਾਂ, ਪਾਲਬੱਟ, ਮੌਰਿਸ ਜੋਨਜ਼ ਆਦਿਕ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਕਾਟਾਂ (Scots) ਵਿਚ ਆਪਸੀ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੈ। ਸਿਆਸੀ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਤੋਂ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੋਮਲੈਂਡ ਦੇ ਮੁਦਈ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਕਾਟਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ, ਸਕਾਟਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਕਾਟਲੈਂਡ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖਲੈਂਡ (ਅਥਵਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ)। ਸਵਿਟਜ਼ਰਲੈਂਡ ਜੇ ਵਸੇ ਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਦੋ ਛੋਟੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਜਿਡਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਬਹੁ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਰਾਜ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਬਹੁ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਥੇ ਵੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ਕ ਅਖੰਡਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਖਤਰਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸਾਮਰਾਜੀ ਬਹੁ-ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧੀ ਜਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਰਖਰੀਦ ਘਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ-ਠੋਕੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸੱਚ ਤੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਮੋਕ ਕੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਵੱਲ ਪਿੱਠ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਨ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਤ ਆਖਣ ਦੀ ਜੁਰਅਤ ਕਰੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਮਹਾਰਥੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਂ ਮਿਲਾਂਦੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੌਮੀ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਯੁਗ ਪਿਛਾਂਹ ਸੁੱਟਣ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਣਤ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੇ ਭਾਈਵਾਲ ਬਣ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਕਿਉਂ?

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ 'ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ' ਲਈ ਆਪਣੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਧੇਰੇ, ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਰਿਕਾਰਡਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਾਕੀ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ, ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਹੱਕੀ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਦੇਸ਼ ਧਰੋਹੀ' ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਅਖੰਡਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਰਾ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਗਰਦਾਨਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ? ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਾਗਡੋਰ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੀ ਰਹੀ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੂਰ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਹੀਣਤਾ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਆਰਥਾਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਡੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਹਰ ਵਾਰੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕ ਆ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਚਲੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ, ਇਤਨੀ ਦੂਰ ਕਿ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਉਸ ਮੰਜ਼ਲ ਵਲ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਬਰੂ ਸਿਰ ਹੀ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ।

ਕਟਤੇ ਭੀ ਚਲੇ, ਮਰਤੇ ਭੀ ਚਲੇ

ਸਿਰ ਭੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੈ, ਹਾਥ ਭੀ ਬਹੁਤ

ਸਭ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਪੇ ਹੀ ਡਾਲੇ ਜਾਏਂਗੇ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਾਜਨੇਤਾ (ਅਕਾਲੀ) ਹੁਣ ਜਦੋਂ ਰਾਜ-ਗੱਦੀਆਂ ਖੁਹਾ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਨ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਆਈ ਹੈ ਲੇਕਿਨ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਕੌਮੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਭੰਬਲ-ਭੂਲੇ ਖਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਾਮਰਾਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ-ਠੋਕਾ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਉਤਾਵਲੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਇਕ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਕੌਮ ਹਨ, ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹਨ,

ਤਦ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ?

ਜੇਕਰ ਹਰ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ? ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਘਰ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਉਸਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ?

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਦਰਦ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਢੂੰਡਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ ਜੋ ਆਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਖਧਾਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ (ਖਾਤਰੂ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ 'ਘਰ' ਦੇ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਤਾਂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਸਾਰਿਆ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਜਾਵੇ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦੇ ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਸਿੱਖ-ਗੁਰੀਲਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਪੌਤੜਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਹੋਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ)।

3. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ (Educational problems of the Sikhs)
:- (ੳ) ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਾ ਸੰਕਲਪ (concept), ਸਾਧਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਢੂੰਢਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਹਾਲਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਨੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ।

(ਅ) ਅਸਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਨਾ ਪੈਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੂਲ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਜੋ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਰੁਪਏ ਖਰਚ ਕੇ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੱਕੜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

(ੲ) ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਉਣਤਾਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਦੂਰ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ? ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਖਰੇ ਉਤਰਦੇ ਹਨ? ਕੀ ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿੱਜ-ਸੁਆਰਥ, ਪਾਰਟੀਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਵੀ ਲੈ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ? ਜੇ ਲੈ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਉਂ? ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਅਕੀਦੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ?

(ਸ) ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਪੱਛੜ, ਬੌਧਿਕ ਤੇ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਾਹ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੀਆਂ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਵੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਲਿਆਣ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ, ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਲਿਆਉਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ?

(ਹ) ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਨਕਲ ਜਿਹੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਾਡਾ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਵੀ ਹੈ?

(ਕ) ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਆਦਿ ਆ ਵੜਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਥਾਹਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਵਾਲੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਪੱਖ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ

ਲਾਭ ਲਈ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਗੁਪਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ? ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੂਮੜਚਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰਾਂ, ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਤੋਂ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕਰਨੇ ਪੈਣੇ ਹਨ?

4. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਫੁੰਡਲਾਂ (Social Problems of the Sikhs) :- ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਘਿਰੇ ਪਏ ਹਨ। ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਘਟਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਕੜ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਾਤ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ, ਅਫ਼ੀਮ, ਨਸ਼ੀਲੀਆਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ, ਟੀਕਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਨ ਤੇ ਜਗਤ-ਜੂਠ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਕੁਝ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੁਝਾਰੂ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਸਤੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਈ ਹੈ। ਵਿਆਹ ਸ਼ਾਦੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਦਾਜ, ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੇਕਾ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਥੋੜਾ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ ਹੋ ਚਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਵਿਆਹਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਜੇਕਰ ਜੈ-ਮਾਲਾ ਰੀਤੀ ਹੀ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਪਨਾਉਣੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਅਨੰਦ-ਕਾਰਜ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ? ਵਿਆਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਪੀਣ, ਭੰਗੜਾ-ਨਾਚ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਨੇ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ।

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ, ਭਿੰਨ-ਭੇਦ, ਪਾੜੇ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਵੰਡ ਛਕਣ, ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਆਣ, ਅਨਿਆਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਡਟਣ, ਸਚੋਂ-ਧਰਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਘਟ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਕਬੂਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ?

5. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਫੁੰਡਲਾਂ (Ideological problems of the Sikhs) :- ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਫਲਸਫ਼ਾ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ, ਆਰਥਿਕ ਆਦਿ ਲਈ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਤੇ ਸੁਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਣ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥੇ-ਨਜ਼ਰ ਰੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੁਧੀਜੀਵੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ-ਵਿਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਉੱਤਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਫਲਸਫ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਦੇਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ, ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਚਮੁਚ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਰਜ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ:

(ੳ) ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਇਸ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸਮੂਹ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ? ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਤਰ-ਕੌਮੀ ਸੰਬੰਧ (ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਪਰ ਦਰਜਾ) ਕਿਵੇਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੋਣਗੇ?

(ਅ) ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ? ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ

ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਮਤ ਬਨਾਮ ਘੱਟ-ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੱਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਇਸ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਾਤਮਕ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ, ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਮੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਦੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ? ਸਾਡੀ ਚੋਣ-ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰਣੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਲਏ ਜਾਣਗੇ? ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਹੁਮਤ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ (ਸਰਬ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ) ਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਸਕਾਂਗੇ?

(ੲ) ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ? ਇਸ ਅਰਥਚਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਕੀ ਕਿਸ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਰਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੋਣਗੇ? ਇਸ ਅਰਥਚਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ-ਨਿਜੀ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ਾ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ? ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਘੱਟ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਉਜਰਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਪਾੜਾ ਕਿਸ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਜੋ ਲੋਕ ਗ਼ਰੀਬੀ-ਰੋਖਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟੋ-ਘੱਟ ਜੀਵਨ ਪੱਧਰ ਤਕ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਥਚਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਕੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਤਨੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਹੜਤਾਲਾਂ, ਕਿਰਤ ਅਸੰਤੋਸ਼, ਪੂੰਜੀ-ਕਿਰਤ ਵਿਵਾਦ, ਕਿਰਤ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ-ਸਮਰਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਲ-ਮੇਲ ਦੀ ਗੁੰਝਲ ਆਦਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੱਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ?

(ਸ) ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਤਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਕੀ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਇਹ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਹਰੇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਜੇਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਣਗੇ? ਅਛੂਤ, ਪਛੜੇ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਦੂਜੇ ਵਰਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਰਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸੁਲਝਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਹਿਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਤਾਲਮੇਲ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸੁਲਝਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ?

(ਹ) ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਰਾਜ ਬਣਤਰ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਰਾਜ ਜਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕਿਸ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਉਤਰਦਾਈ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲੋਕ-ਮੰਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ-ਅਕਾਂਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਕਿਸ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਦਲਾਂ, ਹਿਤ ਸਮੂਹਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ? ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਜਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਾਗੀਦਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਕੁਝ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ? ਸਮਾਜ ਲਈ ਨਿਰਣੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕ-ਭਾਈਵਾਲੀ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ? ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਨੌਕਰਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੁਰਾਈਆਂ, ਤ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ, ਭਾਈ-ਭਤੀਜਾਵਾਦ, ਆਦਿ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ?

ਅਜੋਕੇ ਯੁਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਣਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਧਰਮ-ਨਿਰਪੱਖਵਾਦ, ਸਮਾਜਵਾਦ, ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਾਤਮਕ ਸਰਕਾਰ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਾਤਮਕ ਬਨਾਮ ਸੰਸਦਾਤਮਕ ਆਦਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਸਮਾਈਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਣਗੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਰੂਪ

ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਰ ਰਹਿਤ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ?

ਮੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤਕ ਸਿੱਖਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਸਕੀਏ, ਜੋ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਲਭਾਉਣ, ਹਰ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇਣ, ਹਰ ਸ਼ੰਕੇ ਦੀ ਨਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਮਰਥ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ, ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ, ਮੁੜ ਪ੍ਰੀਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

6. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ (Religious problems of the Sikhs) :- ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੈਮੀ ਆਧਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡਾ ਵਿਰਸਾ, ਸਾਡੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ, ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਰਹੁ-ਰੀਤਾਂ, ਸਾਡੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਧਰਮ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਤ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਕੈਮੀ ਮਹਿਲ ਚਿਟਾਨ ਵਾਂਗ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਸਿੱਖ-ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਮੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ, ਆਉਂਦੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ 'ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ। ਅਜੋਕੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ 'ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਇਹ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕਰੀਏ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਕੀ ਹਨ।

(ੳ) ਅੱਵਲ ਫਰਸ਼ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਕੀਦੇ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ-ਰੁਹਾਨੀ-ਸੱਤਾ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਸਿਰ ਨਾ ਝੁਕਾਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾ ਲਿਆਣਾ। ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। (ਅ) ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਈਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਢੁਣਤਾਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਵਲ ਹੈ-ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਦੀ।

ਸਾਡਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਬਾਲਗ ਮੱਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਲਈ ਝੁਟੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਚੁਣਾਈ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਆ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਕੇਂਸਰ ਦਾ ਰੋਗ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਈ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੱਤਾ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪਿਆਨ ਢੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਚੁਣਾਵੀ-ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਖਤਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ, ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਗੁੰਝਲ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਆਚਰਨਕ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਵੱਡੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੁਜਾਰੀ-ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਬਦਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਭ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਾਚਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਆਮ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਦੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦੀ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ :

1. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਧੂਪ-ਦੀਪ, ਫੋਟੋ-ਪੁਜਾ, ਜੇਤ ਆਦਿ ਹੋਰ ਕਈ ਅਨਮਤੀ ਰਹੁ-ਰੀਤਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ।

2. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕ ਫੈਸਨ ਤੇ ਤੜਕ-ਭੜਕ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਸਭ ਦੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਭੰਗ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਜ ਪਾਵਨ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਿਯਮ ਤੇ ਰੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਕਸਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੇ?

(3) ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ-ਧਨ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ?

(ੲ) ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ, ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ, ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਦੇ-ਪੱਖੀ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ, ਰਾਗੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ, ਕੋਈ ਟ੍ਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ, ਮੁਹਤਬਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਵੀ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਂਦੇ। ਸਾਡੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਰੁਤਬਾ ਬੜਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਰੁਤਬਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ?

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੀ ਟ੍ਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਲਈ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਲੀਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰੀਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਘਟੇ ਘਟੇ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕਰੀਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਤਨੀਆਂ ਤਨਖਾਹ-ਭੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਦੇਈਏ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਸਨਮਾਨਪੂਰਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀ ਸਕਣ। ਕੀ ਇਹ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਮਝਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਂਜ ਹੀ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਣ?

(ਸ) ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ? ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਇਕ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੱਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਨਹੀਂ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਇਕ ਕਰੜੇ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਭਰੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਢੰਗ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਫਕਾਇਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਹਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਵੇ। ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਸਿੱਖ ਫਲਸਫੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣੂ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ-ਫਲਸਫੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਅੱਜ ਅਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਮਹੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਯੋਗਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਬੋਧ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ, ਸਾਹਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਵਾਇਤੀ ਢੰਗ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ, ਨਵੇਂ ਢੰਗ ਸੋਚਣੇ ਪੈਣਗੇ। ਮਨਘੜਤ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ, ਤਰਕਹੀਣ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ, ਹਰ ਸਾਖੀ, ਹਰ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦੇਣੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ, ਕਥਾਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਕ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ, ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ, ਅਜੋਕੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਣਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਗੂੜ੍ਹਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੋਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਉਠਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਜਗਿਆਸਾ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੰਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਦਾ ਨਿਪਟਾਰਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣਗੇ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦਲੀਲ ਦਾ ਢੁਕਵਾਂ ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਸਕਣਗੇ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਉੱਠਦੇ ਵਿਵਾਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਸਥਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਲੱਭਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਵਾਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਤਰਕ-ਪੂਰਨ ਹੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭਦਾ

ਤਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸੰਕੇ ਉਪਜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਮੁਚਲੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਕੱਤਕ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਵਿਸਾਖ ਵਿਚ? ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਗਏ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਗਰੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਗਏ ਕਿ ਨਹੀਂ? ਆਦਿ ਆਦਿ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਸਾਡਾ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਵਾਰਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਉਲਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਭੰਬਲਭੁੰਮਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਕੀਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਡਰਾਮਾਗਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

7. ਸਿੱਖ 'ਪਰਸਨਲ ਲਾਅ' ਦੀ ਲੋੜ (Need of Sikh Personal Law) :- ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹਾਂ। ਤਲਾਕ, ਵਿਰਾਸਤ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਸੰਬੰਧ, ਸ਼ਮੀਨ-ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ 'ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕੋਡ ਬਿੱਲ' ਅਧੀਨ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ 'ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਪਰਸਨਲ ਲਾਅ' ਹੈ :

ਪਰਸਨਲ ਲਾਅ (ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ—personal law) ਆਖਿਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਿਆਹ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ, ਤਲਾਕ, ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਸੁਲਝਾਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਚਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ, ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ, ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ?

ਸਾਡੀ 'ਆਨੰਦ ਵਿਆਹ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ' ਹਿੰਦੂ ਵੈਦਿਕ ਰੀਤੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ, ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸੰਕਲਪਾਂ, ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵੱਖਰੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਲਈ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਆਪ ਕਲਮਬੱਧ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਸੰਗਿਕਤਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਘਟਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਖਤਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਆਪਣੀ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ, ਨੇੜ-ਦੂਰਦਰਸ਼ੀ, ਸੁਆਰਥਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ-ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਪਤੀ-ਪਤਨੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਤੇ ਤੇੜ-ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਨਿਯਮ ਬਣਾਉਣੇ ਚਾਹੀਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜੀ, ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ, ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਅਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟੇਕਸ-ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭੂਮੀ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਚਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਹਨ, ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਫੈਰੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਮੰਗਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ, ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਖੀ, ਸੰਤ, ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਤੇ ਮਿਲ ਬੈਠੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁੰਝਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ। ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਲ ਲੱਭੋ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੱਲ ਜੋ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ। ਫਿਰ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੰਜੀਦਗੀ ਨਾਲ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਕਰੀਏ। ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਆਸਾਂ ਹਨ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਅਵੇਸਲੇ ਰਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਮੁਆਫ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੇਗਾ? ~ ~ ~

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ

ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੱਬੀ

ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਾਲਣੇ ਜਾਂ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਹਰ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਗਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਮਾਣ-ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦੀ ਉਹ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਰੱਖ ਸਕੀਏ, ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ

ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੀ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ ॥

ਉਹ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਮੈਂ ਉਸਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ ॥

ਆਖ ਕੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਵਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਬਾਰ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।

-ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ ਚੇਲਾ ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਸੁਣਿ, ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਸਦਾਵੈ ॥

-ਗੁਰ ਦੀਖਿਆ ਲੈ ਸਿਖ ਸਿਖੁ ਸਦਾਇਆ ॥

-ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖੀ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਖ, ਇਕਸ ਥਾਝੁ ਨ ਹੋਰਸੁ ਦੇਖੇ।

ਅੱਜ ਹਰ ਉਹ ਜੀਵ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਆਖੋ ਕਿ ਜਿਤਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਉਤਨੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਸ਼ਥਾਵਾਂ ਬਣ ਚੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਕਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਬਗੈਰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਆਖਿਆ ਹੈ? ਫਿਰ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਹੱਕਦਾਰ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਇਆ? ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀਖਿਆ ਲੈ ਕੇ, ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਤਦ ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਖਵਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਜੇਕਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ, ਔਗੁਣ, ਆਚਰਣ, ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੇਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਬੁਰਾਈਆਂ ਹਰ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਗਿਰ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਦੱਸੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਏ?... ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਲੋਂ ਦੱਸੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ (Teachings) ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਨਾਮ ਕਿਉਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ?...

‘ਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਸਖਾ ਬੰਧਪ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ।’

ਸਿੱਖ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਹ ਸਦਾ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਸੱਚ ਤੋਂ ਅਵੇਸਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਧੋਖਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਭੁੱਲੇ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਾਤਾ-ਪਿਤਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕ ਚੰਗੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ?... ਕੀ ਸਾਡਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ-ਢੰਗ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਦੇਰ ਨਾਲ ਉਠਣਾ, ਝੂਠ, ਠੱਗੀ, ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤਖੋਰੀ, ਹੋਰਾਫੇਰੀ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਦੇ ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੇਵਨ, ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਰਾਤ 11 ਤੋਂ 12 ਵਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਤੇ ਗੰਦੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਅਸ਼ਲੀਲ ਪਿਕਚਰਾਂ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ?... ਫਿਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਉਮੀਦ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ?... ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੈਣਾਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ "ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਣ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਠਰੇ" ਦੀਆਂ ਲੇਰੀਆਂ ਦੇਣੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਅੱਜ ਅਰਧ-ਨਗਨ ਸਰੀਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਮੋਕਾਅੱਪ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਦਨੀਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਲਾਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਵਾਹ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਰਵਟੈ ਨੇਚ-ਨੇਚ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਨਾਲੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੇ ਕੇਹਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਧਕੇਲ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦੱਸ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਇੱਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਾਂ, ਭੈਣ ਜਾਂ ਧੀ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੈ?... ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਦੱਸੋ ਕਸੂਰ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਡਾ, ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਸਾਤਲ ਵੱਲ ਧਕੇਲਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖੀ ਪਰ ਸੱਚ 'ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਨੀਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਹੁਤੀ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ।

‘ਇਕ ਮੰਨ ਇਕ ਅਰਾਧਣਾ, ਬਾਹਰਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਵੈ।’

ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਚਲੀਆਂ ਆ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਹੁਣ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਮਾਲੀ ਨਵੇਂ ਫਲ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੂਟੇ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ ਪਰ ਜੋ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਲਗਾਏ ਹੋਣ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੇਖ-ਭਾਲ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਠੀਕ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਨਾ ਦੇਵੇ, ਖਾਦ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਲੱਗੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਦਵਾਈ ਨਾ ਛਿੜਕੇ ਆਦਿ, ਤਾਂ ਸੋਚੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਕੁ ਫਲ ਆਉਣਗੇ। ਇਹੋ ਹਾਲ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਅੱਜ ਹੈ। ਨਵੇਂ-ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਚੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਆ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਣਤਾਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਧਾਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਬਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਜਾਂ ਬਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਲੈਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦੱਸੋ ਇਹ ਚਰਚੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ?... ਜਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹੈ।

‘-ਸਲਾਮੁ ਜਵਾਬੁ ਦੇਵੋ ਕਰੇ ਮੁੰਦਰੁ ਘੁਬਾ ਜਾਇ।।’

‘-ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਕਬੂਲਿ, ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਛਡਿ ਆਸ।।

ਹੇਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਤਉ ਆਇ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ।।’

ਅੱਜ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਤਹਿਸ-ਨਹਿਸ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਕਾਰਨ ਹਨ :

(ੳ) ਸੈਕਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਾਹ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ (Free sex)

(ਅ) ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੇਵਨ, ਤਮਾਕੂ ਤੇ ਕੋਕੇਨ ਆਦਿ (Drugs)

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਸਨ:

(ੳ) ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਰੋਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਦੀ ਵੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ।

(ਅ) ਤਮਾਕੂ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਹੁਕੇ ਦੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਾ।

ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਬਾਹਿਆ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਖੰਡੇ ਬਾਟੇ ਦਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਚਾਰ ਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਨੀਅਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਜੇ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਹਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਵਾਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਿਤ ਜਾਂ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਣ ਨਾਲ ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਾਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਬੁਰਾਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਬਚ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਦਸੋਂ ਕੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਛਕਦਾ?... ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਖੂਹ ਵਿਚ ਡਿੱਗਣਾ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਹੀ ਭੁੱਲ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ।

‘-ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਮੁਨਿ ਜਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖੋਜਦੇ ਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ।।

‘-ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਹੈ, ਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਜਣ ਆਵਹਿ।।

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਣੋਜਹਿ ਰੰਗ ਸਿਉ, ਲਾਹਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੈ ਜਾਵਹਿ।।

ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਤੇਜ਼ ਦੌੜ ਰਹੇ ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪਨੀਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹਰ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਨਵੀਨ ਤੇ ਸੇਧ (To the point) ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸਾਡਾ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਚਿਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਚਲੀਆਂ ਆ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਉਹੋ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਲੀਹਾਂ ‘ਤੇ ਖੜਾ ਹੈ। ਕੇਵਲ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਹ ਘੁਟਦਾ-ਘੁਟਦਾ ਮਰ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ। ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੁਣੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਦੋ ਸੌ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਭਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਦਸ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਦਸਵੀਂ ਪਾਸ ਸਨ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਕਾਬਗੰਜ, ਰਿਸ਼ੀਕੇਸ਼ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਦੂਜੇ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਨਪੜ੍ਹ ਤੇ ਬੇਸਹਾਰਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਬਚੇ ਵਾਜਾ ਤੇ ਤਬਲਾ ਸਿੱਖਦੇ ਦੇਖੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਾਲ ਮੋਹ ਲੈਣਗੇ ਪਰ ਸਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਠੀਕ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਸੇਧ ਦੇ ਸਕੇ। ਸਾਡੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ?... ਕਿਉਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਿਆ ਦਾ ਉਤਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ? ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਬਚੇ ਬਚੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਸੋਂ ਸਕੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਹੈ?... ਧਰਮ ਅਪਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੈ?... ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੂਜੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ?... ਸਿੱਖ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਣਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ?... ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਦ ਤੱਕ ਨਿਗੁਰਾ ਹੈ?... ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਸੁਣਾਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਮਕੈ, ਕੈਂਡੇ ਰਾਖਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਹਰਦੁਆਰ ਦੀਆਂ। ਹੁਣ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦਸੋ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਬਚੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿੱਤੋਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਲੜਾਈ-ਝਗੜੇ, ਚੋਪਰ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪੜੇਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਸੀ ‘ਤੇ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਨਿੱਤੋਂ-ਨਵੀਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਜਨਮ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ

ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਾਲਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਨਾ ਮੋੜਨ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਕਰਨ?... ਉਹ ਸੰਗਰਾਥ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਮਾਂ-ਪਿਉ ਦਾ ਮੂੰਹ ਰੱਖਣ ਖਾਤਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਸੰਦ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸੀ, ਫਿਰ ਮਹੰਤ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਚੌਧਰੀ ਬਣਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਹ ਲਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦੇ?... ਨਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ ਪਰ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਹੱਥਿਆਉਣ ਦੇ ਛਡਯੋੜ੍ਹ ਰਚਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੁਰਸੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਵਡਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਗੋਦ ਲੱਗ ਭੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਤਕ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਆਪ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਤਦ ਤੱਕ ਇਹ ਲੱਗ ਰੋਗ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਸਦਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਵਾ ਲਏ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਰੋਗ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਰਸਤਾ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ। ਕੀ ਵਾੜ ਹੀ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਖੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਦੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ?...

- 'ਤਿਤੁ ਸਰਵਰਤੈ ਭਈਲੇ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਾਵਕੁ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਕੀਆ॥

ਪੰਕਜੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਪਗੁ ਨਹੀ ਚਾਲੇ, ਹਮ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਫੁਥੀਅਲੇ॥'

'ਦਾਢੀ ਤਿਸਨੇ ਆਖੀਐ, ਜਿ ਖਸਮੇ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥

ਦਰਿ ਖੜਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇ, ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥

ਦਾਵੀ ਦਰੁ ਘਰੁ ਪਾਇਸੀ, ਸਚੁ ਰਖੇ ਉਰਧਾਰੁ॥'

ਅਸੀਂ, ਕੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਕੀ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਭੋਰਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਇਕ ਜੇਥ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ-ਦੋ ਰੁਪਏ ਦਾ ਨੋਟ ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਜੇਥ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜ ਜਾਂ ਦਸ ਦਾ ਨੋਟ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਅੱਗੇ ਨਾਮਾਤਰ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਭੇਟ ਰੱਖਕੇ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਦਿਖਾ-ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਨੋਟ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਦੇਖ ਲਵੇ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਕਿਤਨਾ ਦਾਨੀ ਹਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਅਗਲੀ ਚੋਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵੇ। ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਥਾ ਸੁਣੀ ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਦਕਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਕਿਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ?... ਸੋਚੋ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਅਸੀਂ ਭਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਘੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੁੱਟੀ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ। ਭੋੜਵੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ-ਅੱਧ ਰੁਪਇਆ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਟਾਲ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਦਾਨ ਕਿਉਂ?... ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਿਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਭੰਡਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਸੰਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਂਗ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਸੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਹਰ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਆਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਫਲਾਂ ਰਾਗੀ 10,000/- ਰੁਪਏ ਇਕ ਘੰਟੇ ਦੇ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਸਪੇਕਸਮੈਨ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ ਦੇ ਜੁਲਾਈ - 1995 ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪੰਨੇ 'ਤੇ ਇਕ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਨੋਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਥੈਲੇ ਭਰ ਕੇ ਲਿਆਏ ਹੋਏ ਹਵਾਈ ਜਹਾਜ਼ 'ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਦੀ ਫੋਟੋ ਛਪੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਕੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗੀ?... ਇਸ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਦੀ ਕੁਝ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ?... ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਦੀ ਨਿਤਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਗੁਜ਼ਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਨੇ ਪਾਏ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ, ਕਵੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਬਹਾਦਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਮੁਨਾਸਬ ਭੇਟਾ ਜਾ ਇਨਾਮ ਦਿੰਦੇ

ਸਨ। ਸਤੋਂ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਦੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਇਹੋ ਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਦੱਸਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਹੁਦਰੇ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਦਾਨੀ ਅਖਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੇ ਖਿਆਲ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਵੀਂ ਰੀਤ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ?... ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਸਹੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ।

-ਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੋ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ॥

-ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ॥

-ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਬੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ॥

ਇਹ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਪਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਰਾਗੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੀਤ ਗਾਉਂਦੇ ਦੇਖੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਟੋਪ ਵੀ ਵਿਕ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਦਸੋਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ... ਸਗੋਂ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਨੀਰੀ ਕਿਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਦਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਭੇਟਾਵਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਇਹ ਗੀਤ ਨਾ ਗਾਉਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਰੋਕਥਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਕਿਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਹੈ?... ਅਤੇ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ?... ਹੋਰ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਫ਼ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਸਦਾ ਸੰਗਤ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਵੇ। ਪਰ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਭੁਝੇ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਚੋਧਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਲੀ-ਭੁਗਤ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਟੇਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁਖ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਠੀਕ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੇਜੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ?...

ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਭਗ 50% ਮਰਦ ਤੇ 50% ਔਰਤਾਂ ਹਨ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਕੌਮ ਇਸ 50% ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਜ਼ਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ-ਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ ਕੋਈ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਪਾ ਸਕਣ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝੋ ਉਸ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਅੱਧੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਜਿਥੇ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ ਉਥੇ ਉਹ ਰਸਤੇ ਦਾ ਰੋੜਾ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਮਨੋਬਲ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਰ ਉਠਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ। ਇਹੋ ਹਾਲਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਬਣ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹਨ। ਕੀ ਕਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦਿ ਜਾਂ ਲੰਗਰ ਵਰਤਾਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਬੀਬੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ?... ਕੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ 30 ਤੋਂ 40% ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਥਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖਲਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ?... ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ 50% ਸਿੱਖ ਜਨਸੰਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਹਰ ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਹਰ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਹੋਈ ਮਾਇਆ ਨੂੰ ਖਜਾਨਚੀ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ

ਤੇ ਭੈਣਾ ਦਾ ਰੋਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਤਰਕੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ। ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਬਚੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਾਂਝੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

‘ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨ ਟਰੇ।।’

ਇਸ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ, ਪਿਤਾ, ਪੁੱਤਰ, ਮਾਤਾ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਅਹੁਤੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਚਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਖੰਡੇ ਬਾਟੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਰਵਾਈ। ਹੁਣ ਦੱਸੋ ਜੇਕਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਆ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਐਸਾ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਐਸੀ ਸੇਧ (Teachings) ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਮਾਰਗ 'ਤੇ ਤੁਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਕਸਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖੀ ਜੋ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਸੋਚ ਸਕੇ। ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਨਕਰ, ਅਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ। ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਮੁਖ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਰੋੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਡ-ਚਾਲ ਵਾਂਗ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈ ਗਏ?... ਇਸ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਦਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ?...

ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੀਨਤਾ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਕੇਵਲ, ਨਵੇਂ ਢੰਗਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਅਕਾਡਮੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਠੀਕ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਵੇ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ। ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਇਥੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪਰਪੱਕ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਹੀਆ ਨਾ ਪਵੇ ਤੇ ਇੰਜ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਸੁਤੇ-ਸਿੱਧੋਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਅੱਜ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਖਤਰਾ ਆਪਣੇ-ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਭੇਖੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ। ਗ਼ਾਤਰੇ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਸਿਜਾ ਕੇ ਦੂਸਰਿਆਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਅੱਜ ਸ਼ਰਾਬਾਂ ਪੀਂਦੇ ਦੇਖੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਹੋਰ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਉਘੇ ਆਗੂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਕਤਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਖੜੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਮੰਦਿਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਰਕਰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੰਜੂ ਵਾਗ ਧਾਗੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਰੇ 'ਤੇ ਦੋ ਇੰਚ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਲਟਕਾਈ, ਕਈ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਕਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੱਚੇ ਤੇ ਬੱਚੀਆਂ ਟੋਪੀ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ-ਫਿਰਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਅਸਥਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਣ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੋਕ ਸਕਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਵੱਡੀ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਵੇਗਾ?... ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਦਾ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਰੂਪ ਅਸੀਂ ਦਿਖਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ?... ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਕੀ ਅਸਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ?... ਅੱਗੇ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਦੇ ਰੇਮ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਸਮਝੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਕੀ ਟੋਪੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਬਾਕੀ ਹੈ?... ਕੋਈ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਈਸਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਫਿਰ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ?... ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਸਾਬਤ ਉਕਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਣੇ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ-ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਨਿਆਰੇਪਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਗੋਭਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ

ਸਾਹ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ?... ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਣ ਕਿਉਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ... ਕਿਉਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਜਿਸ ਭਾਲੀ 'ਤੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਢ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ?...

ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਆਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਲੇਖ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਕੇ ਤੇ ਘੋਖ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਨੀਂਦਰ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਗਣਗੇ। ਥਸ, ਇਹੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਸ਼ਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇੱਛਾ ਹੈ।

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ।

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ।

~ ~ ~

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ: ਨਵਾਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ

ਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੁਰੇਵਾਲ

ਪਿਛਲੇ 100 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਐਨਾ ਕੁਝ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਕੁਝ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਵਾਲ ਦੀ ਖੱਲ ਲਾਹੁਣੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਪਰ ਇਕ ਐਸਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਛੋਹਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਪੇਪਰ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਨਵੇਂ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਜੋ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਇਸ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਰੰਸ਼ ਦੇਣਾ ਅਨੁਚਿੰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪੱਖ

ਇਹ ਪੱਖ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੱਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ 1526 ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਅਤੇ 7 ਦਿਨ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਵਾਨ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਸਹੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਆਯੂ 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਤੇ 7 ਦਿਨ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਕੱਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਤੋਂ ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਤੱਕ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ 70 ਸਾਲ ਤੇ ਘੱਟ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਸਮਰਥਕ ਸ੍ਰ: ਗਿ: ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਰਾ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ 'ਵਿਸਾਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਤਕ' ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਧ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਟੇਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਿਸਟੋਰੀਅਨ ਨੇ 'ਕੱਤਕ ਕਿ ਵਿਸਾਖ' ਵਿੱਚ ਦਲੀਲਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਸਿੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ, ਦਰਅਸਲ ਉਹ ਟੇਵਾ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਚੱਲ ਕੇ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

ਉਪਰਲੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮੀ ਸੂਰਜੀ (ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ) ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਸੰਨ - ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਈਸਵੀ ਸੰਨ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਈਸਾਈ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਨਵਾਂ ਨਾਂ ਸਾਝਾ ਸੰਨ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ - ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲੀਏ

ਕੱਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ, 1526 ਬਿ:

- = 20 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:
- = 21 ਕਤੱਕ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਸੂਰਜੀ (ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਦੀ)
- = ਸ਼ੁੱਕਰਵਾਰ

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ:

- = 7 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1539 ਸ:ਸ:
- = 8 ਅੱਸੂ, 1596 ਬਿ: ਸੂਰਜੀ
- = ਐਤਵਾਰ

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੁ

(ੳ) ਕਤੱਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਤੋਂ ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਤਕ

= 69 ਸਾਲ, 10 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 10 ਦਿਨ (ਚੰਦ੍ਰਸਾਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ)

(ਅ) 21 ਕਤੱਕ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਤੋਂ 8 ਅੱਸੂ, 1596, ਬਿ: ਤੱਕ

= 69 ਸਾਲ 10 ਮਹੀਨੇ 17 ਦਿਨ (ਸੂਰਜੀ ਸਾਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ)

(ੲ) 20 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੋਂ ੭ ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1539 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ

= 69 ਸਾਲ, 10 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 17 ਦਿਨ

= 25524 ਦਿਨ

= 3646 ਹਫ਼ਤੇ, 2 ਦਿਨ

ਦੂਜਾ ਪੱਖ

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਖੋਜਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਅੱਸੂ ਸੁਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪੱਖ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ 15 ਦਿਨ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੀ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਤਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਦੀ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ (ਚਾਨਣਾ ਪੱਖ), ਵਦੀ ਪੱਖ (ਅਨੁਰਾ ਪੱਖ) ਤੋਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੁ 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, ਅਤੇ 7 ਦਿਨ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਯੁ ਨੂੰ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ (ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ) 'ਚੋਂ ਘਟਾ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਵੇਸਾਖ ਸੁਦੀ 3, 1526 ਬਿ: ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਹੁਣ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸੀ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬਿ: (ਸੂਰਜੀ) ਅਤੇ ਸ:ਸ: ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲੀਏ:

ਵੇਸਾਖ ਸੁਦੀ 3, 1526 ਬਿ:

- = 15 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:

= 20 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1526 ਬਿ: (ਸੂਰਜੀ)

= ਸਨਿਚਰਵਾਰ

ਅਸ਼ੁ ਸੁਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ:

= 22 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1539 ਸ:ਸ:

= 23 ਅਸ਼ੁ, 1596 ਬਿ: (ਸੂਰਜੀ)

= ਸੋਮਵਾਰ

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ

(ਸ) ਵੈਸਾਖ ਸੁਦੀ 3, 1526 ਬਿ: ਤੋਂ ਅਸ਼ੁ ਸੁਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਤੱਕ

= 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 7 ਦਿਨ

(ਹ) 20 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਤੋਂ 23 ਅਸ਼ੁ, 1596 ਬਿ: ਤੱਕ

= 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 3 ਦਿਨ

(ਕ) 15 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੋਂ 22 ਸਤੰਬਰ, 1539 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ

= 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 7 ਦਿਨ

= 25727 ਦਿਨ

= 3675 ਹਫ਼ਤੇ, 2 ਦਿਨ

(ੳ) ਤੇ (ਸ) ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮੀ ਸੰਮਤ ਦੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਤੇ ਵਦੀ ਦੇ ਪੱਖ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹਨ।

(ਅ) ਤੇ (ਹ) ਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਉਸੀ ਸੰਮਤ ਦੇ ਸੂਰਜੀ (ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਦੀ) ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹਨ।

ਉੱਤਰੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ ਵਦੀ ਏਕਮ ਨਾਲ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੂਰਜੀ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਸਾਲ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ 11 ਦਿਨ ਛੋਟਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਸਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਤੀਜੇ ਜਾਂ ਚੌਥੇ ਸਾਲ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਸਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ 1 ਮਹੀਨਾ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ 13 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਅਤੇ ਇਕੋ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ 2 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਵਾਧੂ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਲਮਾਸ ਜਾਂ ਲੈਦ ਦਾ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਆਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। 19 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ 7 ਮਲਮਾਸ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ੨੯ ਜਾਂ ੩੦ ਦਿਨ ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਅਤੇ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮੀ 29, 30, 31, ਜਾਂ 32 ਦਿਨ ਦੇ, ਅਤੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਦ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਸ

ਕਰਕੇ ਆਯੂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੋਹਾਂ (ਸੁਰਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰੀ) ਕੈਲੰਡਰਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਕਦੇ ਹੀ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਵੇਗੀ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ (ੳ) ਦੀ (ਅ) ਨਾਲ, ਅਤੇ (ਸ) ਦੀ (ਹ) ਨਾਲ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਆਯੂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਕਿ ਆਯੂ ਕਿਸ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਪਾਠਕ ਗਲਤ ਸਿਟੋ ਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇਗੀ :

(ਖ) ਚੇਤ ਸੁਦੀ 1, 2049 ਬਿ: 22 ਚੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ

(ਗ) ਚੇਤ ਸੁਦੀ 1, 2050 ਬਿ: 11 ਚੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ

(ਘ) ਚੇਤ ਸੁਦੀ 1, 2051 ਬਿ: 29 ਚੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ

ਭਾਵੇਂ (ਖ) ਤੇ (ਗ) ਵਿੱਚ, ਅਤੇ (ਗ) ਤੇ (ਘ) ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਸਾਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੂਰੇ 1 ਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਵਰਕ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਾਂ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ 1 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ 11 ਦਿਨ ਘੱਟ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਵਿੱਚ 1 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ 18 ਦਿਨ ਵੱਧ। (ਖ) ਤੇ (ਘ) ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਸਾਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੂਰੇ 2 ਸਾਲ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਾਂ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ 2 ਸਾਲ ਅਤੇ 7 ਦਿਨ।

ਵੇਸਾਖ ਸੁਦੀ ੩ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਚੇਤੇ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ-ਸੁਰਜੀ ਸੰਮਤ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਗਣਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਪਰਵਾਨਿਤ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਅੱਸੂ ਸੁਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ: ਵਿੱਚੋਂ 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 7 ਦਿਨ ਘਟਾ ਕੇ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਗਣਿਤ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਲਿਖਾਰੀ ਨੇ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਤੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣਤਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰੀਏ, ਗਿ: ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰਾ ਵਲੋਂ ਜਿਸ ਟੇਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਸਾਬਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁਝ ਸ਼ੈ-ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰੀਏ:

1) ਇਸ ਟੇਵੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੱਤਕ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ 9 ਮੱਘਰ, 1526 ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਕੱਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ, 1526 ਬਿ: 21 ਕੱਤਕ, 20 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:, ਸ਼ੁੱਕਰਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ। ਕੱਤਕ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਲੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ 19 ਨਵੰਬਰ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:, 22 ਮੱਘਰ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ਮੱਘਰ ਸੁਦੀ 15 ਸੀ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਕੱਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ 15। ਦਰਅਸਲ 9 ਮੱਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਘਰ ਸੁਦੀ ਦੂਜ ਸੀ।

2) ਟੇਵੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਤਾ ਦਿਨ ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਗਲਤ ਹੈ। ਕੱਤਕ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁੱਕਰਵਾਰ ਸੀ। ਵੀਰਵਾਰ 9 ਮੱਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਬਲਕਿ ਉਸ ਮਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਸੀ।

3) ਗਿ: ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਤੇ ਬੜਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 500 ਸਾਲ ਥਾਅਦ 2026 ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ਫਿਰ 9 ਮੱਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਮਾ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ 2026 ਬਿ: ਕੱਤਕ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ੯ ਮੱਘਰ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ 23 ਨਵੰਬਰ, 1969

ਸ:ਸ: ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਬੜੀ ਸਰਲ ਗਣਿਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 500 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਬਿ. ਸੂਰਜੀ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਹੀ ਤਿਥ ਉਸੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦੀ ਉਸੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ। ਗਣਿਤ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:-

9 ਮੱਘਰ 1526 ਬਿ: = 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:

9 ਮੱਘਰ 2026 ਬਿ: = 23 ਨਵੰਬਰ, 1969 ਸ:ਸ:

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਖਿਆ ਦੀ ਗਣਿਤ :

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1469 ਤੋਂ 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1569 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ = 36525

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1569 ਤੋਂ 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1669 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ = 36525

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1669 ਤੋਂ 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1769 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ = 36514

(1752 ਸ:ਸ: ਵਿੱਚ 11 ਦਿਨ ਖੋਰੇ ਗਏ)

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1769 ਤੋਂ 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1869 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ = 36524

(1800 ਸ:ਸ: ਲੀਪ ਦਾ ਸਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ)

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1869 ਤੋਂ 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1969 ਸ:ਸ: ਤੱਕ = 36524

(1900 ਸ:ਸ: ਲੀਪ ਦਾ ਸਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ)

6 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1969 ਤੋਂ 23 ਨਵੰਬਰ ਤੱਕ = 17

ਕੁਲ = 182629 ਦਿਨ (26089 ਹਫ਼ਤੇ, 6 ਦਿਨ)

ਦੂਜੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ

ਸੂਰਜ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਾਲ = 365 ਦਿਨ, 15 ਘੰਟੀ, 31 ਪਲ, 30 ਬਿਪਲ

500 ਸਾਲ = 182629 ਦਿਨ, 22 ਘੰਟੀ, 30 ਪਲ

(ਸਿੱਟਾ ਉੱਪਰ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ)

1 ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ = 29 ਦਿਨ, 12 ਘੰਟੇ, 44 ਮਿੰਟ, 3 ਸੈ.

182629 ਦਿਨ = 6184 ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾਸ, 12 ਦਿਨ

ਉਪਰਲਿਆਂ ਅੰਕੜਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਇਹ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਤਿਥੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਾਰੀਖ (ਪ੍ਰਵਿਸ਼ਟੇ) ਨੂੰ ਹੋਏਗੀ, 500 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਸੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦੇ ਉਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਸ਼ਟੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ 12 ਤਿਥੀਆਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਿਥ ਹੋਏਗੀ।

ਹੁਣ, 9 ਮੱਘਰ, 2026 ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ 500 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ 9 ਮੱਘਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਤੋਂ 12 ਤਿਥਾਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੁਦੀ ਤੀਜ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਲੇਖਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ 'ਜੰਤਰੀ 500' ਵਿੱਚ 1526 ਬਿ: ਦਾ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਵੇਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਮੱਘਰ ਸੁਦੀ ਦੂਜ ਸੀ। ਉਪ੍ਰੋਕਤ ਗਣਿਤ ਤੋਂ 1 ਤਿਥ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਥੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਣਿਤ ਔਸਤ ਤੇ ਸਥੂਲ ਗਣਿਤ ਹੈ। ਸੂਖਸ਼ਮ ਗਣਿਤ ਨਾਲ 1 ਤਿਥ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਦੇ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 500 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ 6 ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਫਰਕ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ। 9 ਮੱਘਰ, 2026, ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ 9 ਮੱਘਰ 1526 ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ 6 ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਿਨ ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਟੇਵੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਦਿਨ ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਵੀ ਗਲਤ ਹੈ।

ਉਪ੍ਰੋਕਤ ਸਾਰੀ ਗਣਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਗੈਰ ਲੇਖਿਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ 'ਜੰਤਰੀ 500' ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 9 ਮੱਘਰ 1526 ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਮੱਘਰ ਸੁਦੀ 2, ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਸੀ।

ਹੁਣ ਅਸੀਂ ਇੱਕ ਨਵੀਨ ਪੱਖ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ:

ਇਹ ਆਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਿਣੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਚੰਦ੍ਰ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਬੜੀ ਅਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਤੋਂ, ਜੋ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਪੁੱਛਣ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਵਾਬ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਇਹੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਅਜੇਕਾ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਐਨੇ ਦਿਨ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ (ਜੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਹੋਵੇ)। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣਗੇ ਕਿ ਚੇਤ 8 ਦਿਨ, ਜਾਂ ਵੈਸਾਖ 20 ਦਿਨ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, — ਇਤਿ ਆਦਿ। ਉਹ ਕਦੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਵਦੀ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੱਸਣਗੇ।

ਆਓ ਹੁਣ ਗਣਿਤ ਬਿ: ਸੂਰਜੀ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰੀਏ:

ਲੇਖਿਕ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ ੭੦ ਸਾਲ, ੫ ਮਹੀਨੇ, ੭ ਦਿਨ (ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮੀ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ), ਸਹੀ ਮੰਨੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਖੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਜੇਕੇ ਵਿੱਦਵਾਨ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਅੱਜ ਵਦੀ ੧੦, ੧੫੯੬ ਬਿ: ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਬੀੜ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਹੱਥ ਲਿਖਤ ਉਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ। ਡਾ: ਪਿਆਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਟਿੱਪਣੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਗਲਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸੋਧ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕੋਈ ਕਦਮ ਚੁੱਕਦੇ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਗਣਿਤ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:

ਅੱਜ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ:	=	8 ਅੱਜ, 1596
ਆਯੂ ਘਟਾਓ (-)	=	7 5 70
ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਮਿਤੀ	=	1 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1526

(ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ 25731 ਦਿਨ = 3675 ਹਫ਼ਤੇ, 6 ਦਿਨ)

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ 1 ਵੈਸਾਖ (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਜਾਂ ਵਸੋਆ) ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰਹੱਸ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸ਼ੀ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਦਿਨ ਅਤੇ 27 ਮਾਰਚ 1469 ਸ:ਸ: (ਜੁਲੀਅਨ)।

ਇਸ ਸਿਟੇ ਤੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੁੱਜਿਆ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਕਾਰਨ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਸਭ ਖੋਜਕਾਰ ਗਣਿਤ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਸਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਦੂਜੇ, ਜੋ ਗਣਿਤ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਸਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਡਾ: ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 "ਬ: ਨੂੰ 7 ਅੱਸੂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ, ਇਕੋ ਇਨ ਦਾ ਫਰਕ ਪੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ (ਜਦ ਕਿ ਉੱਪਰ ਦਸੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਹੀ 8 ਅੱਸੂ ਹੈ)।

ਲੇਖਿਕ ਦੀ ਗਣਿਤ ਸਿੱਧ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਤੱਕ ਸੂਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ, ਮਹੀਨਾ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਸਾਖ ਸੂਦੀ ਤੀਜ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਦੀ ਤੀਜ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਸੂਰਜੀ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਠੀਕ।

ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਜੇ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਇਸ ਪੇਪਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:

1 ਵੈਸਾਖ 1526 ਬਿ: (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ, ਵਸੋਆ)

ਚੇਤ ਸੂਦੀ 15, ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ

27 ਮਾਰਚ, 1469 ਸ:ਸ:

ਸੋਮਵਾਰ

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ 'ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ' ਵਾਲੀ ਪਉੜੀ ਵਿੱਚ 'ਵਸੋਆ' ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਕੇਵਲ ਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ' ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਸਾਖ ੧ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿੰਗੇ ਟੇਵੇ ਅਰਥ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦੀ।

ਲੇਖਿਕ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਾਉਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਉਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਵਸੋਆ ਪੁਰਬ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੇਣ, ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਲਈ ਚੁਨਣ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਦਿਨ ਹੋਣਾ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਨਵੀਂ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਨਾਲ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਤੱਥ ਮੇਲ ਖਾ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ :

- (1) ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ - 70 ਸਾਲ, 5 ਮਹੀਨੇ, 7 ਦਿਨ
- (2) ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤ ਮਿਤੀ - ਅੱਸੂ ਵਦੀ 10, 1596 ਬਿ:
- (3) ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ
- (4) ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਦੀ 'ਵਸੋਆ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ
- (5) ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਵਸੋਆ ਪੁਰਬ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅਰੰਭਤਾ
- (6) ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਜਣਾ

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ

ਪ੍ਰੋ: ਹਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਿਰਕ

ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ 'ਸੱਚ' ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਦੇ ਸਮਰਥਕ ਹਨ। ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਖੇਤਰ 'ਚੇਤਨ' ਸੰਸਾਰ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਹਾਲੇ ਤਕ 'ਜੜ੍ਹ' ਜਗਤ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਜ ਭੇਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਛਾਣਬੀਣ ਕਰਨ ਵੱਲ ਰੁਚਿਤ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਅਤੇ ਚੇਤਨ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।



ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ॥

ਆਪਨ ਕੀਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਛਿਰਿ ਜਾਪਿ॥

(ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ: 5)

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੈ। ਏਕ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦਾ ਨਮਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਾਦਾਨ ਕਾਰਣ ਵੀ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਆਕਾਰ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਏਕ॥

ਏਕਹਿ ਏਕ ਬਖਾਨਨੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ॥

(ਪੰਨਾ 250)

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਮਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਦੀ ਇੰਤਰਾ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਹੁਣ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਚੇਤਨ ਪੱਖ ਵੱਲ ਰੁਚਿਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ, ਹੋਂਦ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਕਾਰਣ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਨਿਯਮ ਹੀ ਸਮਝ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਹਾਮੀ ਵੀ ਭਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਏ ਹਨ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਰਤਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਇਕ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦਾ ਮੁਦਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਰਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਸਰ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥

(ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ: 5)

ਆਪਹਿ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਆਪਹਿ ਕਰਨੇ ਜੇਗੁ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੇ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਦੂਸਰ ਹੋਆ ਨਾ ਹੋਗੁ ॥

(ਗਉੜੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ ਮ 5)

ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਵੇ ਜੀਉ ॥

(ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ 5)

ਅਕਾਲ ਉਸਤਤ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਣਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋੜਤਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ :

ਪ੍ਰਣਵੇ ਆਇ ਏਕੰਕਾਰਾ ॥

ਜਲਬਲ ਮਹੀਅਲ ਕੀਓ ਪਸਾਰਾ ॥

ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਧੂਰ ਤੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਧੂਰ ਪੂਰਤ ਹੈ

ਧੂਰ ਕੇ ਕਨੂਕਾ ਫੇਰ ਧੂਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ ॥

ਜੈਸੇ ਏਕ ਨਦ ਤੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਕੋਟ ਉਪਜਤ ਹੈ

ਪਾਨ ਕੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਸਬੇ ਪਾਨ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਹਿਗੇ ॥

ਤੈਸੇ ਬਿਸਵ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਭੂਤ ਭੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਇ

ਤਾਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਜ ਸਬੇ ਤਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਸਮਾਹਿਗੇ ॥

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਵਿਚ ਰਤਾ ਭਰ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਦੀ ਗੂੰਜਾਇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੌਣ ਹੈ। ਕਰਤਾਪੁਰਖ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਪੰਚ ਚਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ 'ਹੁਕਮ' ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਅਲਹਿਦਾ ਹਨ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਕ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜਨਗੇ।

ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਮੁੱਢ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਦੇ ਅਸਮਾਨਾਂਤਰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਪੂਰਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਉਹ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਣਾ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾ ਉਤਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਬੁਨਲਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਈਸਾਈ ਮੱਤ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਈ ਉਘੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਦ ਕੀਤਾ, ਤਸੀਹੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਘਾਟ ਉਤਾਰਿਆ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਪਰਨੀਕਸ, ਗੈਲੀਲੀਓ ਅਤੇ ਟਾਈਕੋ ਬਰਾਹੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਰਨਣਯੋਗ ਹਨ। ਰੋਮ ਦੇ ਪੋਪ ਵਲੋਂ ਗੈਲੀਲੀਓ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਫਤਵਾ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਮਰ ਕੈਦ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਪਿਛੇ ਜਹੇ ਇਹ ਫਤਵਾ ਵਾਪਸ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪੋਪ ਨੇ ਗੈਲੀਲੀਓ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਰਖਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਗੈਲੀਲੀਓ ਦਾ ਕਸੂਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਹੋ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋੜਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਦਵਾਲੇ ਘੁੰਮਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਾਪਰਨੀਕਸ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਮੋਢੀ ਸੀ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਜਦੋਂ ਟਾਈਕੋ ਬਰਾਹੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋੜਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਮਨ ਕੈਥੋਲਿਕ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਠੇਕੇਦਾਰਾਂ

ਨੇ ਜਿੰਦਾ ਹੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਭੇਟ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਡਾਰਵਿਨ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਵੀ ਬਾਈਬਲ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਯੂਰਪ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਡਟ ਕੇ ਨਿਖੇਧੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਈਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਟੱਕਰ ਜੋ ਰੋਮਨ ਸਲਤਨਤ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਸਲਾਮ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਵੀ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਸ਼ਰੀਫ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਬੀ ਇਲਹਾਮ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਮੱਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਰਚਨਾ 'ਕੁਨ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਉਚਾਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ। ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਾਲ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਸੱਤ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਇਮ ਹਨ। ਕਿਆਮਤ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਰੱਬੀ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹਿਸ਼ਤ ਅਤੇ ਦੰਯਮ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਸ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਉਪਰ ਜ਼ੋਰਦਾਰ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ : "ਮਿਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੈੜੇ ਪਈ ਕੁਮਿਆਰ..." ਇਸਲਾਮ ਮੱਤ ਕਈ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਈਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਪੈਰੋਬਰ ਵੀ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਹਨ।

ਪੂਰਬੀ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ, ਜੈਨ ਧਰਮ, ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਭ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਮੱਤ ਈਸ਼ਵਰ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੈ। ਜੈਨ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ 'ਪ੍ਰਦਰਲ' ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤਰਕ ਦਾ ਆਸਰਾ ਲਿਆ। ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਸਾਂਝ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਰਖ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੁਰਖ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਅਨਾਦੀ ਮੰਨੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੇਲ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੀ ਅਨਾਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਪੂਰਬੀ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਕ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ-ਮੰਡਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਟਾਖਸ਼ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। 'ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ', 'ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ' ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਲੀਲਾਂ ਬੜੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤਰਕ ਨਾਲ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਹਨ। ਹਵਾਲੇ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਉਦਾਹਰਣਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ :

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਬੁਝੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਧਵਲੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਢਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ ॥

(ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ)

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥

ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥

ਵੇਲ ਨਾ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੇ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਵਖਰੁ ਨਾ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਬਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਗੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੇਈ ॥ (ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ)

ਆਇ ਕਉ ਕਵਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਬੀਅਲੇ?

ਆਇ ਕਉ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਬੀਅਲੇ ॥ (ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ)

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ

ਆਇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਧਰਤੀ ਉਪਰ 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖ' ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਇਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਮਾਡਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗੁਰਮੁਖ-ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਘਾਤਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਸੈ ਮਾਰਗ ਤੇ ਚਲ ਕੇ ਸੰਤਵ ਹੈ। ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖ' ਪਦ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਅੰਧ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰੂੜੀਵਾਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਹਿਮਾਂ ਭਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਲ ਦਾ ਪਰਦਾ ਫਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਖੰਡਨ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਡਨ ਵਿਧੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬੜੀਆਂ ਠੋਸ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਦਲੀਲਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ, ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪ ਦਾ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਭੇਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਘਾੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਭੇਦ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਤੱਥ ਅਠਾਰਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਤੱਕ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਸਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਜੇਕਰ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਪ੍ਰੰਪਰਾ ਲਈ ਗਾਢੀ-ਰਾਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਅਤਿਕਥਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਯੂਰਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਲਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਨਰ-ਸੁਰਜੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਯੁੱਗ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਦੌਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਬੜੇ ਅਚੰਭੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਨਾ ਦੇ ਸਕੀ - ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਦੀ ਪੜਚੋਲ ਕਰਨੀ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਨੇ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਮਾਡਲ ਘੜਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਇਨਕਿਥਿਨ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਕਿਸੇ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਮਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਦੇ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ, ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਆਦਿ ਅਤੇ ਪਸਾਰੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਰੋਡੀਓ-ਦੂਰਬੀਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਤਾਰਾ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਲੱਖੋਂ ਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੇਸ਼ਨੀ ਦੀ ਜਾਂਚ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਲਗਭਗ ਵੀਹ ਅਰਬ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਪਸਾਰਾ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ, ਕਦੋਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੋਇਆ - ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਕੋਈ ਠੋਸ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈ ਸਕਿਆ। ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਆਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਮਾਡਲ ਘੜੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਪ੍ਰਵਾਣਿਤ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੀ

ਰਚਨਾ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਂਤੱਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਸਫੋਟ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਈ, ਜੋ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਭਾਰਾ ਸੀ। ਛਿਣ ਤਰ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਮੂਲ ਕਣ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਏ। ਇਸ ਗੈਸ ਰੂਪ ਮਾਏ ਦੇ ਉੱਧੁਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਸੂਰਜ, ਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਜਨਮ ਲੈਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਕਈ ਗਲੈਕਸੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਅਮਲ ਹਾਲੇ ਵੀ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਉੱਜੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਉਮਰ ਭੋਗ ਕੇ, ਤਹਿਸ ਨਹਿਸ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਮੁੜ ਮਹਾਂਤੱਤ ਵਰਗੇ ਮਾਏ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਟ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਬਲੈਕ ਹੋਲਜ਼' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਇਕ ਚੱਕਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਪਸਾਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਖਰਬਾਂ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਪਰਤਵਾਂ ਸੁੰਗੜਨ ਅਮਲ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਮਹਾਂਤੱਤ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸਮਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਪਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਆਦਿ, ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੜੇ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਤੱਥ ਉਪਲੱਭ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਲਈ ਪਥ-ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਪਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਧਰਤੀ, ਅਕਾਸ਼, ਸੂਰਜ, ਚੰਦ, ਤਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਨ-ਰਾਤ ਵਰਗੀ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਂਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਸੁੰਨ-ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਬਿਆਨ ਹੈ:

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਉੱਧੁਕਾਰਾ, ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ, ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ:1, ਪੰਨਾ 1035)

ਭਿਲਮਿਲਿ ਭਿਲਕੇ ਚੰਦੁ ਨਾ ਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਰਣਿ ਨਾ ਬਿਜੁਲਿ ਗੈਣਾਰਾ ॥

ਅਕਬੀ ਕਬਉ ਚਿਹਨੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੋਈ, ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਇਦਾ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ:1, ਪੰਨਾ 1033)

ਜਦੋਂ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਧਰਤੀਆਂ, ਸੂਰਜ, ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਾਲ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਏ:

ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਖਾਣੀ ਅਰੁ ਖੰਡ ॥ ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਆਕਾਸ਼ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥

ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਦੇਸ ਭੂ ਮੰਡਲੁ ॥ ਕਈ ਕੋਟਿ ਸਸੀਅਰ ਸੂਰ ਨਖੜੁ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ. 5, ਪੰਨੇ 275-76)

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਬਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 5)

ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਅਸੰਖ ਮੈ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਤੂ ਕਰਤਾ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਤੁਧੁ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਤੁਧੇ ਗੋਈ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ. 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1283)

ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡੀ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਕਈ ਗੇੜੇ ਲਾ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ:

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ ॥

ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ. 5, ਪੰਨਾ 276)

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਤੇ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਖੇੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੋਈ ਕਿਉਂ? ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਣ ਕਰਤੇ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਵੱਸ ਹੈ :

ਕਾਰਣੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ, ਜਿਨਿ ਕਲ ਰਖੀ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ. 2, ਪੰਨਾ 148)

ਧਰਤੀ ਉਪਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਇਕ ਅਦਭੁੱਤ ਘਟਨਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦੀ ਪਕੜ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆ ਰਹੀ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਇਸ ਅਮਲ ਦਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਵੀ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ:

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ, ਪਵਨੇ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ, ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥

(ਆ ਗ੍ਰੰ., ਮ.1, ਪੰਨਾ 19)

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੇਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੋਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖੁ ਜੋਇਓ ॥੧॥

.....

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਹਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਮ. 5, ਪੰਨਾ 176)

ਜੀਵ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਵਿਨ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਜ-ਵਿਕਾਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੇਤ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਅਮੀਬਾ ਤੋਂ ਕਈ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਕਰੋੜਾਂ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜਾਮੇ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਪਰਲੀਆਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਦੇ ਗੇੜ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਆ ਭਟਕਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜ਼ੂਨਾਂ ਭੁਗਤ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਬੰਦ ਖਲਾਸ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੀਵ ਵਿਗਿਆਨੀ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਧਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਜਿਨਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਲੇਖ ਵੀ ਭਲੀਭਾਂਤ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਬਇਆਲੀਸ ਲਖ ਜੀ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਤੇ

ਬੀਨਲੁ ਭੇਲਾ ਕਾਇ ਕਰਉ ॥ (ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ, ਪੰਨਾ 485)

ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਏਕੀਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਕੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਧਾਰਣਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬ੍ਰਹਿਮੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਜ਼ਿਆਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਇਕੋ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ

ਵਿਆਪੀ ਨਿਯਮ ਅਧੀਨ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਣਗੇ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ 'ਹੁਕਮ' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰ-ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਤੋਂ 'ਹੁਕਮ' ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਵਰਨਾ 'ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਹੁਣਾ ਕਥਿ ਕਥਿ ਲੂਝੈ' ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੋਧ ਦੋਦੀ ਹੈ :

ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡਿ ਖੰਡਿ ਸੇ ਜਾਣਹੁ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝਹੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਪਛਾਣਹੁ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਪੰਨਾ 1041)

ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡੇ ਸੇਈ ਪਿੰਡੇ ਜੇ ਖੋਜੈ ਸੇ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

(ਆ. ਗ੍ਰੰ. ਪੰਨਾ 695)

ਆਸ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਵਿਚ 'ਖੋਜੀ ਉਪਜੇ ਬਾਦੀ ਬਿਨਸੈ' ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ 'ਕਥਿ ਕਥਿ ਲੂਝੈ' ਦੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਸਮਝੇ।

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Section VI
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE SARDAR DALJEET SINGH MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL SIKH STUDIES CONFERENCE

Scholars of Sikh history and culture gathered at Chandigarh for Sardar Daljeet Singh Memorial International Sikh Studies Conference on September 19th and 20th, have considered a variety of subjects of vital importance to the Sikhs, and resolve as follows:

1. The original volume of Guru Granth Sahib known as the Kartarpuri Bir is of proven authenticity and is in existence. Almost an exact version of it, printed in the sixties by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, is freely available. No pre-canonical text has been discovered in the last five centuries. Scholars doing research on *gurbani* must see that they do not overstep these parameters. Since, Guru Granth Sahib is the living Guru of the Sikhs, it is the sole scripture. No one can dilute that status under any pretext. Likewise, none can challenge the revealed character of *gurbani*, as ten prophets of God have borne solemn witness to it. In order to put an end to motivated Euro-centric and Hindu-centric 'research', the type of which has been conducted in the recent past by Hew McLeod, Harjot Oberoi, Pashaura Singh, Gurinder Singh Mann and Piar Singh, and has been adequately shown up for fake by about three dozen scholars from all over the world, it is necessary that no one be allowed to undertake the so-called textual analysis of Guru Granth Sahib, for the original volume is in existence.
2. The process of putting Guru Granth Sahib on computer has started. Several computerized versions already exist. Notable amongst them are the Australian and the American versions. Facilities of simultaneous translation to other languages are also available. Very soon perhaps, they will be harnessed to translate Guru Granth Sahib to other European, African and Oriental languages. It is imperative that the entire authentic text in Roman letters is made available, because in its absence, errors may creep

into different translations. Such errors will require many decades and a great effort to weed out, should that happen. It is, therefore, necessary to immediately promote an authentic Roman version of the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. We resolve to harness our resources to accomplish the task at the earliest.

3. It has been noticed in the recent past, that motivated research, in utter disregard of the universally accepted norms, and consequently detrimental to the basic concerns of Sikh society and of Sikhism, has been conducted by Sikh chairs established outside India. Within India, there is a distinct move to use the existing Sikh chairs in academic bodies for the purpose of dissolving the Sikh identity. It is understood that more and more such chairs will be created to pursue this objective. In the interest of truth, it is imperative that strict standards of research be ensured regarding the work of these chairs. Decisions regarding selection of research projects, of publications and of incumbents of these chairs, should be made in a high powered committee appointed with the approval of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Appointments to all such chairs must be done with the approval of this committee and the norms of research must also be approved by it.
4. For about half a century, all Sikh congregations have been praying to God for the grant of open, unhindered access to Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and other Gurdwaras in Pakistan. But no effective steps have been taken by any organization to give concrete shape to the aspirations of the people. It is now time to concretize the intense emotional and spiritual need of the entire Sikh people all over the world, for unhindered open access to the birth place of Guru Nanak and other holy shrines situated in Pakistan.

This gathering requests the Government of India to seek relaxation of visa restrictions in a manner that visitors to those shrines are afforded an unhindered access.

This congregation resolves to work for the above purpose and requests the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and responsible political parties to move the Punjab Government and the Government of India in the matter.

Sikhs living abroad are requested to approach their respective Governments with a view to seeking the required relaxation of visa restrictions for the purpose of pilgrimage.

5. It has been observed that the SGPC is not competently advised on religious affairs. The result is that old worth-preserving gurdwara buildings are being pulled down by *kar sewa* people. Priceless manuscripts and historical artifacts are being destroyed, and works of art are fading away. Several monuments, proud reminders of our past, are fast going out of existence.

It is, therefore, necessary that the SGPC forms an active Religious Advisory Body which must approve such demolition and building plans. It must be entrusted with the work of preserving important reminders of our past. It could be set up in the form of a Training and Research Institute entrusted also with imparting training in preservation of cultural objects, artifacts and monuments.

6. Baisakhi of 1999, which the entire Sikh world has been talking of celebrating in a significant manner, has almost arrived. It is imperative that a Programme Co-ordination Committee with a central office be set up to co-ordinate all efforts at celebrating the great event in a befitting manner. This is clearly a responsibility of the SGPC.
7. In the last one decade or so, a holocaust of great magnitude has swept over the Sikh people. It has left behind a rich harvest of martyrs. They stood fast by their faith and sacrificed their lives for the glory of the Khalsa Panth. It is necessary to perpetuate the memory of each one of them by raising suitable individual memorials, as well as a collective one. It is also proposed that the daily Sikh *ardas*, in order to commemorate the martyrs, may include the following citation just after the third paragraph:

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ, ਭੁਜੰਗੀਆਂ ਚੁਰਾਸੀ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਘਲੂਘਾਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਢਾਲ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਅਣਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਤਸੀਹੇ ਸਹੇ, ਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਟਾਇਰ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਸਜ਼ਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਮਰ ਘਾਲਨਾ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਪਰ ਕੇ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ, ਬੋਲੋ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ !

8. It is necessary that our schools undertake to impart religious instruction. For this purpose, suitable syllabi and literature will be required. Some voluntary organizations like the Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, Gurmat College and the Sikh Missionary College have done commendable work in this regard. It is desirable that such voluntary organizations in the field be encouraged to prepare standard syllabi as well as literature required for the purpose. Perhaps the Principals of the Khalsa schools can be requested to work in close liaison with them for the purpose. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee must take the initiative and arrange to have the syllabi and the required literature prepared.
9. The electronic media are worldwide commanding great impact. The Sikhs are yet to formulate a proper policy to exploit it. This matter cannot be postponed any further. An effort must be made to harness the media in the community's service. Beginning can be made by making a few films on approved subjects. It is also necessary that a TV channel be bought for airing the Sikh culture and the Sikh point of view on important aspects.
10. The present Conference and some others held by the Institute of Sikh Studies earlier, were conceived for the purpose of countering the anti-Sikh propaganda of certain motivated scholars. We resolve to make the Conference on Sikh Studies an annual event, to be held in India and abroad, alternately.
11. There is an urgent need for a World Sikh Studies Institute to cater to the academic requirements of the Sikh religion, and to produce advanced level scholars and preachers of Sikhism capable of effectively interpreting the message of the Gurus. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, as representative organisation of the Panth, should take necessary initiative.

APPENDIX II

INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES: AN INTRODUCTION

The Institute was organised and registered in 1989 at the initiative of a few individuals, who felt concerned over the large-scale misrepresentation of Sikh doctrines, misinterpretation of Gurbani, and the lack of understanding of the message of the Gurus, its import on history and its contribution towards development of mankind. The founding members were:

Bhai Ashok Singh	S. Jagjit Singh
Ms. Baljit Kaur	S. Karnail
S. Daljeet Singh	Dr Kharak Singh
General Gurbakhsh Singh (Retd)	Dr Kuldip Singh
Dr Gurdarshan Singh	Gen. Mohinder Singh (Retd)
S. Gurdev Singh, Justice (Retd)	Dr Sukhjeet Kaur
S. Harpal Singh	Ms. Surinder Kaur
S. Inderjit Singh Jeji	

Unfortunately, Sardar Daljeet Singh, who was the guiding spirit, and some other stalwarts, Justice Gurdev Singh, General Mohinder Singh, and General Gurbakhsh Singh are no more. Later additions to membership are S. Gurtej Singh, Brig. Hardit Singh, Dr Gurcharan Singh Kalkat, S. Gurdev Singh, Dr Kirpal Singh, and S. Sardul Singh Pruthi.

AIMS & OBJECTS

The Institute is a non political organisation set up mainly to interpret and propagate Sikh religion. Among the specific objectives of the Institute are:

- i. To interpret the basic philosophy/theology of Sikhism enunciated in the original writings of Guru Nanak and the succeeding Gurus.
- ii. To study the history of development of Sikh religious thought, society, traditions and polity, and to bring out the contribution of Sikhism towards advancement of universal religious thought and

human welfare.

- iii. To prepare and publish suitable literature on the above aspects and to disseminate information on Sikhism through common media, meetings, seminars, talks, discussions, etc.
- iv. To watch and to counter any attempts to misinterpret Sikhism, or any hostile propaganda against religious philosophy, doctrines traditions and history of Sikhs or the Sikh way of life.
- v. To encourage establishment of Centres/Groups/Fora of Sikhs at suitable place in India to promote the aims and objects of the Institute.
- vi. To maintain close liaison with affiliated Centres through visits, periodical newsletter exchange, and supply of literature published by the Institute from time to time.
- vii. To establish and maintain contact with existing religious organisations and institutions interested in the aims and objects of the Institute, and to extend co-operation to as well as seek co-operation and assistance from them on specific projects.
- viii. To set up a Reference Library for the benefit of members and scholars working for the Institute.
- ix. To prepare and introduce courses of instruction on Sikhism in schools and colleges, willing to participate.
- x. To cater to the needs of masses and religious groups of Sikhs in their missionary pursuits, mainly through supply of literature.
- xi. To co-operate with non-Sikh organisations genuinely interested in the study of Sikh religion.

PROGRESS

1. **JOURNAL:** A journal 'Abstracts of Sikh Studies' was started in 1991. It is now issued quarterly in January, April, July and October every year. It is already counted among top research journals with a global readership, and is known for high academic standard. The journal deals with current academic issues relating to Sikh religion and history, besides exposition of basic Sikh doctrines and interpretation of Gurbani.

2. **SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES:** In 1990-91 seven International Sikh Conferences were organised in U.K., Canada, and U.S.A., at London, Toronto, Vancouver, Berkeley, Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York, to promote understanding of Sikh thought. Such conferences are now an annual feature. Besides seminars arranged from time to time, the members meet regularly every month to discuss academic issues.
3. **SPECIFIC ISSUES:** Some of the specific issues addressed by the Institute are:
 - a. **ENCYCLOPAEDIAS:** Entries on Sikhism in encyclopaedias contain a lot of incorrect information. The Institute has already taken up the issue with the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Websters. The former has agreed to amend the entry in its next edition.
 - b. **FUNDAMENTALISMS OBSERVED:** A publication 'Fundamentalisms Observed' brought out by the American Academy of Art & Science, Chicago, contains a lot of blatant misinformation. A detailed note refuting the false propaganda was sent to the Editors and has also been published in our journal.
 - c. **ACADEMIC CHALLENGES:** Attempts to confuse Sikh identity, from certain quarters have been adequately dealt with by the Institute. Similarly, crude attacks on the authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir and Guru Granth Sahib, engineered through hired scholars, have been exposed and repulsed.
 - d. **UNIVERSITY SIKH CHAIRS:** Some chairs, created abroad with contributions from Sikhs, have been virtually hijacked. An influential clique, known for its hostility towards Sikh religion, has manipulated to instal its own men. As such the chairs have become seats of gross misinformation and propaganda against Sikh religion and history. The Institute is spear-heading a campaign against their sinister activities.
 - e. **VIGILANCE:** The Institute has been carefully watching the developments in the academic world, and warns against

hostile literature, through reviews or special articles.

- f. **ADVICE:** The Institute advises the SGPC, as well as the Government on major academic issues from time to time. Besides, numerous enquiries from individuals and organisations have been answered.

4. **BOOKS:** Publication of books is a major activity. The following is a list of the books published by the Institute or caused to be published through other agencies:

Advanced Studies in Sikhism	: Eds. J.S. Mann & H.S. Saraon
Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies	: Eds. Kharak Singh, G.S. Mansukhani & J.S. Mann
Recent Researches in Sikhism	: Eds. J.S. Mann & Kharak Singh
Sikh Tradition	: Gurdev Singh
The Sikh Ideology	: Daljeet Singh
Sikhism: A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism	: Daljeet Singh
Researches in Sikh Religion & History	: G.S. Dhillon
Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir	: Daljeet Singh
The Sikh Revolution	: Jagjit Singh
Persepectives on Sikh Studies	: Jagjit Singh
In the Caravan of Revolutions	: Jagjit Singh
Anglo-Sikh Wars	: Karnail Singh
India Commits Suicide	: G.S. Dhillon
Sikhism: An Oecumenical Religion	: Sirdar Kapur Singh
Planned Attack on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib	: Ed. Giani Bachittar Singh
Essentials of Sikhism	: Daljeet Singh
Episodes from Lives of the Gurus	: Kharak Singh & Gurtej Singh
Invasion of Religious Boundaries	: Eds. J.S. Mann, S.S. Sodhi & G.S. Gill

5. **TRANSLATION INTO OTHER LANGUAGES:** The Institute has taken up translation of selected material into other Indian languages. Sardar Jagjit Singh's famous book "The Sikh Revolution" has been rendered into tamil by Dr N. Muthumohan of the Kamraj University Madurai. Translation of books into Bengali is also in hand with the help of Dr Himadri Banerjee.
6. **FUTURE PROGRAMME:**
 - a. To intensify the above activities.
 - b. To set up a Centre/Institute to cater to the needs for research and training in Sikhism, with the help of the community and its other organisations.

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